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# FUNDAMENTALS OF FREETHOUGHT

BY

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NEW YORK  
PETER ECKLER PUBLISHING CO.

1923

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Printed in U. S. A.

JAN 19 '23

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## PREFACE

Fundamentals of Freethought has been chosen for the title of this book because each of the studies it contains deals with a question of fundamental importance in the field of religious thought.

Whether there is or is not in the universe a God—a conscious, controlling being who knows our wants and answers our petitions; whether Christ was an actual historical character, or an ideal elder brother evolved out of man's religious yearning—a figment of the imagination—a myth; whether, assuming that there existed a quite human, Jewish peasant preacher named Jesus who was put to death, he really triumphed over the tomb and arose from the dead; whether we are or are not destined to enjoy another life—these questions, like the others discussed in this book, sound the depths of religious belief. They ask for a rehearing of the evidence for religion's major assumptions. They examine the foundations on which religion rests.

The facts involved in each study not alone justify but demand the attitude of Freethought—

## PREFACE

a frank facing of reality as seen in the light of reason.

Alike in the consideration of religious and secular questions the Freethinker relies on reason as the only guide to truth. The Christian, on the contrary, puts his trust in faith as the determinant of truth in religious matters. But a moment's reflection will suffice to show that faith is not a faculty of the mind, but mere acceptance, belief, trust. Reason, on the other hand, is a faculty—the faculty with which we resolve problems, weigh evidence and determine the relative values of thoughts and things, the faculty with which we judge and determine the merit or demerit of any proposition.

Being the critical faculty, the arbiter of the mind, reason is the instrumentality with which we distinguish, as best we may, the true from the false. Consequently, reason is the mind's supreme judge, and faith, acting in a subordinate capacity, has no other legitimate office than to accept and be governed by the decisions of this court. Intelligent faith is therefore faith guided by reason; while faith unsupported by reason is mere credulity, and faith contrary to reason is superstition.

Nor can the Christian rationally oppose to this fundamental fact what he regards as a revelation from heaven. For if the Bible is addressed to man, it must be addressed to his reason, since

## PREFACE

reason is the only faculty that can read and understand it. Accordingly, it is for reason to say whether that book is wise or foolish, humane or cruel, harmonious or contradictory, the perfect work of an infinite God or the fallible production of mistaken men.

The truth or untruth of what is called "revelation" must therefore be determined by reason. Likewise, the existence of God, the reality of Christ, the promise of heaven and the threat of hell, must abide the verdict of the brain. Into the court of the human intellect every claim made in the name of religion must appear for judgment. Religion, that is to say, must find its sanctions in humanity.

Freethought alone is the foundation on which can be erected the house of truth, and in showing that the claims of religion crumble at the touch of reason, this book lays down fundamentals of Freethought—foundation stones of the religion of humanity.

MARSHALL J. GAUVIN.

PITTSBURGH, PA.  
September 25, 1922



## CONTENTS

IS THERE A REAL GOD?.....	1
Man invented gods in his effort to account for the phenomena of nature. As the knowledge that the universe is governed by law advances, belief in God disappears.	
DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?.....	39
In early Christianity, Christ was a personified idea. For this idea a life story was afterwards invented. St. Paul knows nothing of the Christ of the Gospels, concerning whom contemporary history is wholly silent.	
DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?.....	73
The story of the resurrection of Christ is one of many similar stories. Nobody saw the resurrection take place. The contradictory narratives in the Gospels prove the astounding claim a fable.	
THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE.....	105
The scriptures uphold all the major forms of immorality. Humanity has made moral progress in proportion as the Bible has been left behind.	
IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?.....	137
The mind or soul as a function of the brain dies with the brain. Immortal life is unthinkable, undesirable, and in a universe of endless change, impossible.	
ONE HUNDRED CONTRADICTIONS IN THE BIBLE	175
The contradictions in the Bible certify that that book is not the word of God, and that we need not believe it since its writers did not believe one another.	



## IS THERE A REAL GOD ?

FROM the early morning of the world, until very recent times, the best energies of mankind have been wasted in the worship of gods. All these gods have been naturally produced. They originated in the minds of men who, by their invention, sought to account for the facts of nature. The poor savage found himself surrounded by phenomena he did not understand. Knowing nothing of natural law and order, ignorant of the relation of cause and effect, his simple mind was terrified and amazed by the things that he observed. The plaintive moan of the wailing wind, the thunder's awful roar, the lightning's blinding flash, the devastating flood, the lingering disease that tortured and deformed, and death that stilled the voices of the ones he loved, convinced him of the presence of evil powers that worked to bring about his ruin.

But there were other things that seemed to strive in his behalf. The genial warmth of the sun, the soft light of the moon, the pleasant showers of summer days, the abundance of fish

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

and forest foods, and the health and happiness that he enjoyed—these led him to believe that some of nature's powers were his devoted friends. Thus all the friendly and unfriendly phenomena were personified; and thus were made the gods. The savage mind filled the earth and air with friends and foes. Whatever brought him good was a friend—a god; whatever brought him harm was a foe—a devil. To him, nothing was natural. Everything that happened had a supernatural cause. The world was filled with miracles and marvels. All things were the sport and prey of good and evil gods.

These beliefs have been common to certain stages of mental development the world over. To the savage tribes of our own day, the wind and sky, the sun and sea are personalities. Not only have nature's forces been made into gods, but also nearly every kind of bird and beast has been deified and worshipped. Among the Thlinkit Indians the crow is worshipped as the supreme god. The hawk is the god of the people of North Borneo. The Bijagis of Africa pay divine honors to a goat. The dog is worshipped by the Nosarii of Western Asia. The leopard is believed to be a god by many tribes in Western Africa. Among the Siberian tribes great reverences is paid to the bear. The monkey-god, Hanuman, is worshipped in India. In Siam the

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

white elephant is sacred; it is believed that it may contain the soul of a Buddha. Even the loathsome lizard is deified by the people of the Pacific; and for many thousand years, serpent worship has been common in many parts of the world. Nor have savage tribes been alone in worshipping animals as gods. The Egyptians, whose civilization is still the wonder of the world, worshipped as a god the bull Apis. To this god, they sacrificed white oxen; from him the priests pretended to receive sacred oracles; and when he died he was mummified and buried in a rock tomb, another bull being worshipped in his stead.

As man has advanced from savagery to civilization, he has improved the character of his gods. The highest conception of man is man; therefore, the evolution of God has been towards the human form.

To the Egyptians, Osiris was the Lord of Lords—the sum of all the noblest agencies. Sometimes he was represented as the sun, sometimes as the river Nile, and sometimes as a man, wearing on his head a crown, a globe or a lotos-flower. His wife was the goddess Isis, the mother of Horus; and her worship continued for several thousand years.

In India, the great Brahma, the master of fate and life and death, is still represented with

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

four heads and as many arms. In his four hands he holds a manuscript of the sacred Vedas—the inspired Bible of the Hindoos.

The Greek god Zeus bore the perfect human form. He was the father of all men and the king of all gods. His special interest was the protection of the stranger, the suppliant, the family and the nation. His consort was Hera, though other goddesses and some mortal women shared his love, and bore him many gods and goddesses.

Jupiter, the Roman, was worshipped as the best and greatest of the gods. In his hand he held a sceptre, symbolizing his supreme authority. With his wife, Juno, the queen of heaven, he watched over the lives of the Romans, and carefully protected their property. The greatest triumph of human art was the colossal statue of Jupiter Olympus made in ivory and gold by the immortal Phidias. Standing below these supreme gods in the order of divinity were multitudes of lesser gods. The attributes and passions were deified, and every department of human activity was presided over by some particular divinity.

All these gods were worshipped in gorgeous temples; all were attended by robed and solemn priests, who offered them sacrifices and performed their sacred rites; their statues crowded the pantheons; their loves, and hates and riv-

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

alries, their good and evil deeds, made up the popular mythologies; and countless millions of human beings believed them to be real, and worshipped them with pious adoration. It seems almost incredible that highly civilized nations should have been, for so many centuries, so thoroughly deceived. It seems amazing that rational human beings should have invented gods and then have fallen to their knees and worshipped them.

Yet so it was. In the names of scores of false gods, priests have proclaimed promises and threats. In the names of these gods, countless prophesies have been made. At the command of priests, millions have sacrificed to these imaginary phantoms, their flocks and herds, their precious babes, their liberty and their very lives. Nothing is more cruelly sad than the history of religion! No suffering has been greater than that which man has borne in the worship of the gods, that he has made.

Now, if the idea of God has been a slow and painful growth in the human mind, if the savage was mistaken in deifying the powers of the world, if the mighty nations of antiquity worshipped a host of gods that were but children born of the imagination of poets and of priests, why may not the Jews have been mistaken in their worship of Jehovah? If the splendid Zeus

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

of the intellectual Greek was but a poet's dream, what evidence can there be that the deity of the uncultured Jews was the true and only God? If the mighty Jupiter, who led to victory the gallant armies of imperial Rome, was but a figment of the brain, where shall we find the proof that the god of barbaric slaves was the God who framed a universe of stars?

Jehovah was the god of a few wandering tribes. These tribes finally settled in Palestine, a bleak and barren corner of the world, a wilderness of mountains and rocks. They were without art, without science, without commerce. They had no navy and their army was but a plundering horde that butchered women and babes. They lived in miserable tents and huts. They had no schools or colleges and knew no system of education. For many centuries, they had no written language and possessed no line of literature. They were woefully ignorant, pitifully poor, cruel to the last degree, and benighted in the most frightful superstitions. For ages, they sacrificed their sons and daughters to their imaginary god, and afterwards sought for many centuries to appease the wrath of their divinity by the sacrifice of a ceaseless procession of oxen, lambs and doves. Surrounded by many nations whose civilizations are to-day yet mighty in their ruins, the ancient Jews have left no evi-

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

dence to indicate that they were aught but barbarians.

The religion of the Jews made them narrow and fanatical. They imagined themselves the chosen children of the Deity, and looked on other people as the objects of God's revenge and wrath. And yet, nearly always, they were the slaves of stronger nations; and while the other peoples flourished and prospered, they remained miserable, poor and despised. If history proves anything, it proves that the religion of the Jews has been to them an unadulterated curse. I ask again, why should we believe that the god of such a people is a real and supreme being?

It may be well to note that in earlier times Jehovah was not the god of the Jews. He was the god of the Midianites, an Arabian by birth. From the Midianites the Jews borrowed him, and we, in turn, borrowed him from the Jews. Jehovah was a tribal god. He was worshipped as the god of war. In this respect, however, he was not alone. Even in the limited territory of Canaan, he had to share military honors with several other tribal gods. In times of war, the Sidonians put their trust in Ashtoreth; the Ammonites prayed to Milcom; the Moabites relied on Chemosh, and the Jews sought victory at the hands of Jehovah.

By and by the Jews began to write. Their

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

literature took a religious form. They wrote their hatred and contempt of other nations, magnified themselves and glorified their god. They made Jehovah mightier than all the other gods combined. Stories of victories were invented to illustrate his power and protection. He was represented as conversing with their ancestors, leading them in their migrations, giving them their laws, establishing their religion, watching over their lives, helping them to kill surrounding nations to get possession of their land, and making them in every way his chosen and beloved race. Fanatical prophets and lying priests solemnized their fabrications by frequently repeating, "Thus saith the Lord," and the nation was kept in intellectual slavery and religious fear by the inventions of false religious leaders. These writings were afterwards collected in book form, and have since been known as the Holy Bible.

The god described in the Bible is the God of the Christian world. Let us see if he is real. According to the Bible, God created the human race and pronounced them good. He also created a devil—a powerful enemy—knowing that this devil would corrupt his helpless children. The very first day God allowed his wicked rival to be victorious, to hurl humanity from the height of perfect innocence to the depth of vilest sin. God

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

knew all this would happen; in fact, he left the stage to allow the tragedy to go on. Would a real God create a rival and allow the fiend to pollute the morals of his perfect world? The story sounds like fiction at the start.

Centuries rolled away, and mankind did not improve. Then God resolved to drown the human race, excepting eight persons, in a universal flood. Why did God drown his children? Why did he cover the world with the swollen corpses of his sons and daughters? Was it because they were wicked? Why did he not reform them? Better still, why did he not destroy the devil and thereby keep his children pure? Think of the character of a God who will allow his own devil to drive him to such desperation that his only hope of peace lies in the drowning of a world! Can such a god be real?

The children of Israel were slaves in Egypt. Pharaoh was the tyrant who oppressed them. God made up his mind to liberate them and to punish, not only Pharaoh, but the innocent Egyptians as well. And this is how he proceeded. He turned all the water of Egypt into blood; he filled their houses, their chambers and their beds with loathsome frogs; he covered their bodies with lice; he tortured them with flies; he killed their cattle with a plague of murrain; he destroyed their crops with fire and hail; he filled

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

their country with locusts to eat the remnant of their wasted food; he plunged them into thick darkness for three days, and yet he was not satisfied. Again he hardened Pharaoh's heart. What for? So that he might yet further wreak his vengeance on a people who had done no wrong. And what did he do next? He murdered all the firstborn in the land of Egypt—"from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon." Throughout the whole nation there was not a home "where there was not one dead."

Would a good God punish the innocent for a crime of the guilty? Would he overwhelm a nation with frightful plagues and assassinate the firstborn child in every home, to avenge himself on a petty tyrant? If the devil had been dealing with the Egyptians, could his conduct have been more infamous than was that of Jehovah? Can such a god be real?

But the Jews themselves fared worse at the hands of their god than did their Egyptian masters. They were promised a land flowing with milk and honey. For this land, they were induced to leave their Egyptian homes. Soon, however, they had reason to regret having taken Jehovah at his word. He was to them a worse tyrant than Pharaoh. He plagued and tortured and slew them by thousands. After having

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

strewn the wilderness with the bleaching bones of multitudes, he told those that remained that they would never see the promised land, that only their children would, that their carcasses would fall in the wilderness and that they would "know his breach of promise." Of all the Jews who started out from Egypt, only two, Caleb and Joshua, reached the land of Canaan. Jehovah promised his people freedom and a fertile soil. He led them to exile and death upon a weary waste. Can such a god be real?

The god of the Old Testament was difficult to please. He was continually calling for sacrifices. To satisfy his craving, a Niagara of blood poured from the veins of butchered beasts. His priests were ever cutting the throats of lambs and bulls. Of all the gods, Jehovah was probably the most fussy. Everything had to be done in his own particular way. In the twenty-ninth chapter of Exodus, he instructs the Jewish priests in the following manner: "Then shalt thou kill the ram, and take of his blood, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about." It is hard to say how many people Jehovah would have killed had they happened to put the blood on the left ear or on

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

the wrong toe. So far as we know, the god of the Jews never smiled, and he probably held the fragrance of flowers in supreme contempt; but when he saw his priests well decorated with the blood of beasts, and the air thick with his favorite perfume,—the smoke of burning flesh—the wrinkles of his wrath may have relaxed a little.

In Ezekiel, Jehovah tells his people: "And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I, the Lord, have deceived that prophet;" in Deuteronomy, he says to them: "The Lord thy God is a consuming fire;" in Jeremiah, he assures them: "Ye have kindled a fire in mine anger which shall burn forever;" in Isaiah, he proclaims: "And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood as with sweet wine;" and in I Samuel, he utters this frightful command: "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." So, the god of the Bible describes himself as being untruthful, a consuming fire, forever angry, the high priest of cannibalism, and the commander-in-chief over wholesale murder! Can such a god be real?

Why should humanity believe that a book containing such descriptions of deity is inspired and

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

divine? Why should we go to barbarians for our ideals of divinity? Why should we worship a cannibal god? Why should we build temples in honor of a god who took extreme delight in witnessing the long drawn out tortures and the death of helpless women and innocent babes? If Jehovah were to come to earth, he would be the most undesirable citizen in the world. Why, he is said to have killed, on one occasion, fifty thousand and seventy persons merely because they had looked into a wooden box. Can such a god be real?

According to Christianity, Jehovah is the only god; and yet we are assured that Jehovah had a son, who is also a god. This son was born among the peasants of Judea, about two thousand years ago. His mother was the wife of a Jewish mechanic. The child grew to manhood as other children grew. His habits were like those of other men. He ate and slept, wore clothes and worked, preached a while and died. Those who knew him thought he was a man; but if the church is right, he was really an infinite God.

At this point, we are confronted with mystery and miracle. While it is held that Jehovah was the father of Christ, it is also claimed that Christ was the son of the Holy Ghost. Of course, it is argued that the god of the Jews and the Holy

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

Ghost were one and the same person; but of this there is not the slightest evidence, and the case is not strengthened at all by the fact that the whole Jewish religion is a passionate denial that Jehovah ever had a son.

Another peculiar thing about the parentage of Christ, the God of Christianity, is the claim that he was born of a virgin. Of course, everybody knows that virgins do not give birth to children, and most of us believe that when women do become mothers, their children are very seldom gods. Be that as it may, the mother of Christ, whatever may be said of her being a virgin, was, in fact, a married woman. The first page of the New Testament assures us that Joseph was her husband, and that she, Mary, was Joseph's wife. The belief that Joseph was the father of Christ is confirmed by Mary herself. Finding her child in the temple one day, she said to him: "Thy father and I have sought thee, sorrowing." And yet, in spite of the fact that Joseph and Mary were husband and wife long before Christ was born, in spite of the fact that Mary called Joseph the father of her child, in spite of the fact that every Jew ever did, and ever will, deny that Jehovah became the father of another god, the churches teach that Christ was God and the son of God. Can such a god be real?

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

According to Christianity, Jehovah is God, Christ is God and the Holy Ghost is God; and yet it is said that there are not three Gods, but only one God. This is the doctrine of the Trinity. This doctrine was developed by the Roman Catholic Church, and is to-day the basis of the faith of the Christian world. The Athanasian Creed, in part, reads as follows: "The Godhead of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost is all one, the glory equal, the majesty coeternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father is uncreated, the Son is uncreated and the Holy Ghost uncreated. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible. The Father eternal, the Son eternal and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet they are not three Eternals, but one Eternal. As also they are not three uncreated, nor three incomprehensibles; but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible. In like manner, the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Ghost almighty. And yet they are not three AlUITHIES, but one Almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God. So likewise, the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord and the Holy Ghost is Lord. And yet they are not three Lords, but one Lord. For as we are compelled by the

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

Christian truth to acknowledge every person by himself to be God and Lord, so we are forbidden by the Catholic religion to say there are three Gods or three Lords."

Such, in part, is the Catholic definition of God. Upon that foundation has been reared the entire structure of orthodox Christianity, Protestant as well as Catholic. If that definition fails, Christianity falls. And can such Trinitarian jargon satisfy, for one moment, the mind of a thinking man? Can we conceive of anything more incomprehensible than the statement that three Eternals are only one Eternal, that three Almhights are but one Almighty, and that three Gods are, in fact, exactly one God? Is there anything in language more thoroughly irrational, more utterly idiotic? If a man is supposed to believe such an absurdity, why is he endowed with reason? Or is it true that belief in God is possible only after we have thrown away our reason? Can such a god be real?

But what is God? Does the word describe any particular thing? Is God an actual being? Christians say that God is a spirit. Well, what is that? Is it something that can be seen and felt and heard? Does it have weight? Does it occupy space? If the word "spirit" corresponds to anything that is known, what is that thing?

Again I ask, "What is God?" The Episcopalian Creed answers as follows: "There is but one

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts or passions.” Take note of the words, “*without body, parts, or passions.*” A more striking definition of *nothing* could not be imagined! In endeavoring to define God, Protestantism succeeds only in denying his existence! No body, no parts, no passions—that is to say, no head, no brains, no knowledge, no love, no hate, no anything—and yet he is “everlasting.” Everlasting what? Why, everlasting Nothingness!

The fact is that the human mind cannot conceive of a spiritual existence. We cannot grasp the thought of life apart from matter. Whatever lives, must have material form. All nature denies that there can be spirit where there is no substance. If reason and experience count for anything, we are forced to the conclusion that those who say that God has neither “body, parts nor passions,” simply give expression to what they do not know. God is either something or nothing. If he is something, he must have a body—he must be material. If God thinks, he must have a brain. If he feels, he must have nerves. There is, there can be, no thought apart from brain; and there can be no sensation, no feeling, where there are no nerves. Again, a brain and a nervous system cannot be conceived of apart from a stomach. Whatever lives must eat. No exception to this rule can be imagined.

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

We can reason only from what we know. But how can a being having a body and a brain, a nervous system and digestive organs, be conceived of as a God? How can a being that bears the form of man, or of any other creature, be infinite in power and in knowledge?

We are told that God thinks, makes plans, and carries out intentions, and that he is jealous, loving and kind. If this is true, he must be like a human being—he must have personality. But if God is personal, how can he be infinite? An infinite personality is a contradiction in terms. Personality cannot contain infinity any more than a cent can contain a million dollars. The personal and the infinite are opposite extremes. In saying that God is a personal being, man simply projects himself into the darkness of nature. Unable to conceive of any creature of nobler outline than his own, he thinks of God as having a human form. Thus, man makes God in his own image. Civilized man magnifies the attributes of the god of primitive man, and then tries to think of Deity as both infinite and personal.

The science of astronomy proves the idea of a personal god to be utterly childish. Let us glance for a moment at the structure of the universe. The earth on which we live has a diameter of about 8,000 miles. Our sun is a molten mass of fire with a diameter of 866,200 miles, and his circumference is more than two

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

and a half million miles. The magnitude of the sun is 1,305,000 times the size of our little globe. Several of the planets of the Solar system are vastly larger than the one on which we live. Uranus has 59 times the volume of the earth, Neptune 103 times, Saturn 848 times; and it would take 1,389 worlds like ours to make a globe of the size of Jupiter. The sun is 93,000,000 miles from us. Neptune, whose path marks the boundary line of the solar system, is separated from the sun by 2,792,000,000 miles. The mighty orbit of this planet is 5,584,000,000 miles wide. An express train speeding at the rate of a mile a minute, and traveling night and day, would require 176 years to go from the earth to the sun. In making the long journey from the sun to the planet Neptune, the same train, dashing at the same speed, would continue in its flight 5,280 years.

And yet, our whole solar system is but a speck of foam in the midst of a shoreless ocean. An infinite universe lies beyond our little group of worlds. It would take seven hundred times as many planets as our solar system contains, to equal the weight of the sun. But it would take 1,500,000 suns like ours to reach the grand dimensions of the star Arcturus. Our sun glorifies the day from a distance of 93,000,000 miles, but Arcturus revels in brilliant splendor 11,500,000 times farther away. Sirius, the Dog Star, brand-

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

ishes his swords of light fifty-eight thousand billions of miles from our little grain of sand; while Polaris, the wondrous Star of the North, pours his silver flood upon us through the awful distance of two hundred and ten thousand billions of miles. Our flying train would reach the sun in 176 years; but how long would it take to reach this flaming monarch of the sky 2,378,000 times farther away?

On a clear night, we behold the field of heaven thickly sown with twinkling stars. How many of us reflect that our nearest neighbor in the starry realms, Alpha Centauri, is distant from us twenty millions of millions of miles? It takes a ray of light, traveling at the velocity of 186,000 miles a second, more than three years and a half to reach us from that star. The stars we see are glowing suns. Twenty millions of them are scattered along the path of the Milky Way. Separated by inconceivable distances, alone, in groups, and in galaxies, they fill every region of the infinite expanse with the matchless glory of their splendor. In the presence of such a universe, a universe where countless millions of suns and worlds wheel in orbits great and small with inconceivable velocity—a universe so vast that the flying arrows of light spend millions of years in crossing but a part of its domain—in the awful presence of such infinitude, our little baby earth seems but a speck of dust.

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

How could a personal God be master of such a universe? How could he be everywhere in it at the same time? Give God a stature a million miles in height; give him a brain as large as the volume of all the oceans, and yet, in the presence of the countless billions of complications, movements and destinies of our infinite universe, he would be as helpless as a babe lost amid the crags of a mountain. Can such a god be real?

“But,” says the Christian, “God must control the universe, for he created it.”

Let us see. If the universe was created, an eternity must have passed away before the work of creation began. During that eternity, there could have been nothing in existence—not a ray of light, not a grain of sand—nothing except God. Think of an infinite God spending eternity in an empty universe, enveloped in darkness, like an eternal convict in the solitary confinement of a dungeon! By and by God made up his mind to create the suns and worlds. Where did he get his material? Did he create it out of nothing? How could nothing be transformed into the wondrous stars? Can we conceive of nothing becoming something?

On the other hand, if matter previously existed, the universe was already here, and there was no creation. It must be assumed that either God or the universe never had beginning. Now, if God could exist from eternity, why could not

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

the universe? What reason can there be for the belief that God could exist from eternity but that that universe could not? If the universe had to come from somewhere, where did God come from? If material enough to make a God existed without beginning, why not enough to make a universe? The fact is that to put a God back of the universe only creates a mystery. God and creation are both inconceivable. To argue that there was a time when the universe did not exist, to say that it was brought into existence out of nothing, and to invent an inconceivable creator to account for it, is utterly unscientific. The universe is here. It is composed of matter and force. Science has demonstrated that matter and force cannot be separated, and cannot be destroyed. Logic forces us to conclude that that which cannot be destroyed could not have been created. Thus the evidence of science proves that the universe is eternal, and that matter and force, ever in motion, building, changing and transforming, produce all the forms and wonders we behold.

Although millions have abandoned the belief that the universe was designed, that belief is still held by Christians. They compare the universe to a watch, and they say that as the watch needs a watchmaker, so the universe could not exist without a designer. A moment's consideration reveals the folly of this argument.

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

The universe is not like a watch, and there is not the slightest evidence that it was designed. Besides, if the universe needed a God to design it, how does it happen that God could exist without a designer to design him? Could anything be more illogical than the assertion that an infinite designer could exist without design, but that the universe could not?

In Christian reasoning, the design argument runs: The watch is a wonderful thing; therefore, it must have been designed: the watchmaker is more wonderful; therefore, he must have been designed: the universe is more wonderful still; therefore, it, too, must have had a designer. But God, the most wonderful thing of all, exists without design! When the design argument reaches God, it destroys itself. To give this argument logical value would require an endless succession of designing Gods, each one designed by a previous designer. Such an argument proves too much; consequently, it proves nothing.

How can a thinking man look out upon the world and come to the conclusion that back of all things there is a great designer, who is infinitely wise and good? It will not do to say that some things are designed and that other things are not. If nature is controlled by an infinite God, that God must be responsible for everything that happens. Every form and fact and change in nature's vast domain of action must be the

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

work of his designing hand. Did a good God design a world where life feeds on life—a world in which ferocious beasts eat the flesh and drink the blood of other creatures? Eternal agony sits in every forest where the cries of half devoured victims never die away. Every sea is filled with fanged and frightful monsters in eager search of something to consume. Millions of human beings have been devoured by carnivorous beasts.

Not far from a jungle in the province of Bengal, a mother sits in a hammock, reading. Her little child is playing at her side. The awful nearness of a tiger is unknown. The monster's eye surveys the scene, and he steals with noiseless tread toward the unhappy pair. The child greets the tiger with a smile. A little scream is heard. The mother turns and, horror struck, sees her child hurried away to the jungle in the fangs of the devourer. Armed men make search. The tiger is found and killed. In his stomach is found the flesh of the frantic mother's babe. Is the tiger the work of God's design? Would a good God destroy a child to satisfy the appetite of a tiger?

Did an infinite God fill the world with every kind of foul disease, in order that his children might be tortured and deformed? Are leprosy, cancer and consumption a part of God's design? The cancer is as wonderful as any fact in nature. It is as perfect in its way as is the human brain.

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

Who can see God's works of love in the earthquake, the pestilence and the famine? Who shall mark designing wisdom in the volcanoes that overwhelm the innocent, the floods that drown them, and the cyclones that strew the plain with their mangled corpses?

If an infinite God is master of the world, he is responsible for all the cruelty of the past—for all the suffering that has been endured. When mothers sacrificed their babes to loathsome serpents, they but fulfilled his wise design. When millions were enslaved, when earth ran red with cruel wars, when the virtuous starved in dungeons, when the brave and the loving were consumed in the flames of persecution, when tyranny triumphed over liberty destroyed, his purpose was accomplished in the world.

If nature is the work of God's design, he is responsible for all the ignorance and superstition that have led mankind astray, for the spread of false religions that have filled the world with hate, for the overthrow of civilization, for the tortures of the Inquisition, for the massacre of St. Bartholemew, and for the rule and sway of countless forms of wrong.

For more than three years, the most terrible war known to man has been sapping the vitality of civilization, filling the earth with millions of martyrs' graves, and spreading hate and grief throughout the world. If a God designed the

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

facts and forces of existence, he is the author of the accumulated horrors this war has brought upon mankind.

There can be no escape from reason. We must face the facts. It is design or no design. Make it design and God must be accountable. It is not nature *and* God; it is nature *or* God. If God designed the human body, he also designed the parasites that feed upon its organs and destroy it. If he designed the eye for seeing, he designed the cataract to take the sight away. A design that defeats design, hardly shows the wisdom of a God.

Admit design in nature and it must be held that everything was intended for its particular purpose. The poison in the serpent's fangs was made to poison his prey; the microbe was made to destroy the man; and every disaster in the world was intended to take its toll of human lives. The burning of a ship at sea, the wrecking of a train on land, the explosion of a mine—everything that wounds and kills, falls under God's design. The persecutor and the martyr are designed—the one to prepare the fagots, the other to die in the flames! Booth and Lincoln are designed—the one to be the assassin, the other to be his victim! When God designed a thing, he must have known just what that thing would be, and he must have intended that it should be just what it is. A world in which there

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

is ugliness as well as beauty, vice as well as virtue, cruelty as well as kindness—a world in which the strong consume the weak, a world where history is stained on every page with the blood of martyred millions, is surely not the perfect handiwork of an infinitely wise designer.

Religion sees this great difficulty, and so, to account for the evil of the world it invents a devil. This devil is supposed to be ever warring with God and turning his works into ruin. God intends a thing to be good; the devil makes it bad. God creates souls for heaven; the devil lures them into hell.

During the Christian ages, it was believed that the world was a battle field where God and the devil fought to gain control. Hosts of angels served in the army of God; while Satan's battalions were recruited from the imps of hell. These gods and devils interfered with all the phenomena of nature. The weather and the crops, health and disease, were in their hands. They were interested in all human concerns. The poor people, trembling with fear, resorted to every means that superstition could suggest to win the favor of the gods and to drive the devils away. They worshipped relics and wore charms; they counted beads and kissed crosses; they sprinkled holy water and rang bells; they made pilgrimages and processions—they did all they could think of doing to escape the grim

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

clutches of Satan's fiends. The world was filled with terror. Christendom was a madhouse. Christianity was insanity. It was believed by popes and priests, by statesmen and jurists, that human beings sold themselves, body and soul, to the Devil. Men and women were put to death for having entered into compacts with Satan to produce storms, to blight crops, to kill cattle, to prevent women from bearing children, to cause sickness, and to bring about the death of their neighbors. It was universally held that women, especially, yielded themselves to Satan's power. Thousands of women were accused of having ridden through the air on a broomstick or a goat, to attend a Witch Sabbath, of having borne children to Satan, of having changed themselves into wolves, and of having done hundreds of other impossible things.

For the victims of these awful accusations, there was no mercy in the Christian world. The whole church, Protestant as well as Catholic, was fired with a holy zeal to destroy the kingdom of the Devil. Multitudes of men and women, who were guilty of no wrong, were broken on the wheel, stretched apart on racks of torture, whipped to death, hanged and burned alive, as victims of the devil superstition. Myriads of children were put to death in the same frightful ways, charged with the same impossible crimes.

No imagination can even faintly conceive of

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

the horrible history of Christianity! No historian can compute the number of its victims. For many centuries, that fiendish religion filled the world with instruments of torture and chambers of death. And yet the Church was honest. She believed that God needed her support in his war against the Devil. She regarded it as a sacred duty to destroy those who joined the ranks of Satan.

The church of to-day is but the withered skeleton of what the church has been. She has largely passed out of the life of the world. The major portion of her power has been destroyed. The meaning has faded from her dogmas. On every side she sees to-day the rising tide of unbelief. All the little devils have disappeared and the prince of fiends lingers only in the minds of the benighted and the stupid. He is still prominent at revivals; but from the world of culture he has been banished forever.

Civilization grows as religion dies. Once the world bowed and believed; now it stands erect and reasons. All questions relating to God and the Devil are now weighed in the balance of the brain. Every man who thinks at all knows now that the evil of the world cannot be explained by the agency of a devil. There can be only one infinite power in the universe. If that power is God and if there is a devil, the devil must be under God's control. He is what God made him

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

and he can act only as God allows. God could kill the devil, but he keeps him for a purpose; therefore, God is responsible for all the devil does.

Having abandoned the idea of a devil and finding it impossible to believe that the ugliness and cruelty of nature are the work of a good God, some thinkers have supposed that God is limited in power, and that he is doing the best he can. This appears to be the belief of Mr. H. G. Wells. In "God The Invisible King," the eminent novelist insists that God is not material but spiritual, yet a person, though without sex. He is a finite being neither all wise, nor all powerful, nor omnipresent. He did not create nor does he control the universe. He had a beginning and has grown with the growth of mankind. Confined within time, dwelling neither in matter nor space but in the life of humanity, his first purpose is to acquire knowledge to use his growing power. He is not providence. He operates solely through human intelligence. He may be known as a man knows a friend and yet of his existence there is no proof but the conviction that he is! Assuredly, such a contention is the child of despair. To deny creation, to hold that the universe is not controlled, is to deprive God of any function in nature. To say that God had a beginning, that he has grown with time, is to bandy empty phrases—words that correspond to no reality. Any argu-

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

ment that denies the supremacy of God as creator and controller denies also his existence. The fact is that nowhere in nature can man behold the footprints of Diety. So far as we can observe, the movements of the universe are never interfered with by any outside power. Everything we know mirrors forth the fact that nature is a unity, eternally existing of and by herself, embracing within her mighty sway all causes and all effects, ever producing new forms from old materials, unfolding an endless procession of life and death, growth and decay, and holding all forever in the infinite control of eternal and unchanging natural law.

The work of evolution is everlasting. In every region of the heavens there are condensing nebulae—worlds in the process of formation. Millions of ages ago, one of these vast clouds of primal world stuff spread across our solar sky. The mighty cloud cooled, and condensed, and broke up into parts, and after illimitable time the sun and planets were formed. Innumerable ages rolled away—for nature knows no hurry—the molten earth cooled and crusted over; and by and by, in the warm primeval ocean, some elements combined and generated life. The first life was extremely simple—each individual creature consisted of a single cell. In the course of evolution, the single cell grew and divided, and subdivided, until it became two layers of cells—

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

the gastrula. Growth and change continued, and in time life reached a worm-like stage. This creature had no head, and only a pulsating tube for a heart. Then came the fish and later on the reptile, then the quadruped in many forms. Life spread out in all directions, and earth was filled with strange and fearful beasts. From a high branch of the tree of life, ape-like creatures were developed, and from these in time arose a race of fierce and brute-like men. By means of the survival of the fittest, nature continued her great refining process. Slowly, imperceptibly, unconsciously, the low forehead of primitive man was raised; his small brain was enlarged; his projecting jaw drawn in; the brute expression of his countenance softened into the human smile.

It took nature millions of ages to make a man. She filled the world with everything that crawled and flew and climbed countless ages before our ancestors were born. And when at last man did appear upon the scene of nature, he was for hundreds of thousands of years the prey of fierce and hungry beasts. Our poor ancestors were shown no favors. No God ever taught mankind a single fact. Painful experience alone has been the teacher of our race. As our fathers learned how to protect themselves, their arts and institutions gradually improved. Civilization was born of self defence.

The forward march of the race has been im-

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

peded in countless ways by the slavish spirit of religion. As in his forest home man was the victim of the devouring beast, so for untold ages since he has been the prey of the destroying priest. By ignorance and superstition, by falsehood and torture, the priest has made himself the greatest enemy of mankind. By bribing the believer with heaven and by threatening the doubter with hell, he poisoned the human mind with indolence and fear, and paralyzed for centuries the wholesome action of the brain.

During the frightful ages when the church controlled the world, it was a crime to reason, a crime to investigate, a crime to express any thought that differed from the Christian creed. Every question about nature was answered by an appeal to some ghostly personality. Everything was believed to have been created perfect a few thousand years ago. It was believed that the heavens were but a few miles above the earth. This was the only world in existence; the sun traveled round it every day; and the stars were little ornaments set out to beautify the sky. Nobody entertained the faintest conception of natural law, and the all-embracing fact of evolution was entirely unknown.

Since those days, science has completely revolutionized the thinking of intelligent mankind. The telescope has made the universe a limitless expanse. The stars have become glowing suns.

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

Our little earth is no longer the favored centre of the cosmic scheme, but a grain of sand on the shore of an infinite ocean.

Turning their attention to the forms of life that everywhere surround us, the men of science have demonstrated that all the living creatures of the earth have been evolved from a single life stem; that man is but an animal of nobler form and finer brain; and that the work of evolution is going on in the present as it went on in the past.

Science has established, too, the greatest fact the mind of man can know—the fact that all nature from sand to stars, from microbes to men, is controlled by universal and everlasting law. Nowhere in the universe is there the slightest room for chance. Cause and effect are everywhere supreme. No miracle can happen. No prayer can be answered. The order of nature is inviolable, and neither God nor Devil can interfere.

In the presence of this grand revelation of science, all bibles and religions, all heavens and hells, all devils and gods, dwindle into puerile superstitions. They but express the ignorance of men who lived in days when nature was unknown. Science has investigated a thousand departments of nature and from every field her patient students have returned with truths that completely destroy the miraculous and the supernatural.

We know now that nature has no religious preference and knows no respect of persons; that

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

earthquakes and volcanoes will consume human beings in spite of prayers and preaching; that the lightning strikes the virtuous as often as the vicious; that the drought and the flood never pay the slightest heed to piety and praise; that health and disease do not depend at all upon devotion to or disbelief in God; that no man can be good enough or bad enough to change in any way the course of nature's action. We know that nature does nothing out of regard for human beings; that she has no ear to hear our suplications, no hand to supply our wants. Unconscious of what we think, knowing nothing of our wants and ways, she bestows no blessings and seeks for no revenge. To her the sublime and the ridiculous are the same — she cares as much for a mosquito as for a man. Toward everying that lives she sustains an attitude of infinite indifference.

Nature is, in fact, the very opposite of what religion has taught, and yet a true knowledge of her ways comes to us laden with the greatest hope and promise for the world. All the progress that mankind has made in the past has been due to the labor of those who have worked in accordance with nature's laws. The felling of forests, the cultivation of fields, the building of cities, the construction of ships, the invention of machinery, the founding of schools — all the achievements that have helped to refine and civilize the world, have proceeded in accordance with natural law.

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

Therefore, when men and women shall have learned that the universe in its entirety is governed by law, that a god is inconceivable, and that prayers cannot be answered, they will cease to seek aid from the supernatural. They will then rise from their knees and strive by every human means to improve the conditions of the world. They will learn how to conquer disease and how to lengthen life. They will turn all churches into schools where nature will be interpreted by honest men. They will endeavor to make men moral by developing the rational powers of the brain. They will re-arrange the industry of the world on principles of justice and pay to labor its just reward. They will look with pity on those who tread the weary paths of crime and seek by sanity and kindness to win them back to honorable ways. They will paralyze forever the murderous arm of war. They will do all that can be done to beautify the world and to make its people happy, generous and free.

This world is our real home; all mankind are our brothers and our sisters, and the life we now enjoy is our heaven and our hell. We now know that all religions are human institutions; that all ideas of God are mere guesses of men; that no divine revelation has ever come to earth and that no supernatural religion can possibly be true.

From the high vantage ground of twentieth century civilization, we can survey the religious

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

history of our race and mark the birth and death of many gods. We see the naked savage trying to explain nature's forces by regarding them as personalities. We see him worshipping as gods even rivers, trees and animals. We see rude tribes like the Jews making their gods cruel, warlike and revengeful. We see nobler nations of higher ideals, picturing their gods as poetic, intellectual and kind. And we behold that in every country, man's highest conception of God assumes the form of a deified man. We behold the great pagan world—India, Egypt, Babylonia, Persia, Greece and Rome—richly supplied with countless gods and goddesses, whose work of supervision and control extends over all the forces and functions of nature. We observe that the greatest gods are always those of the powerful and leading nations.

The scene keeps changing. One by one the nations disappear; their religions pass away; their gods die and are buried. New nations, new religions, and new gods arise and claim the allegiance of mankind. With the roll of the centuries, the number of gods grows less and less, until at last one supreme divinity is thought to rule the world. In the service of this god, mankind give up, for many centuries, every interest but religion. The world becomes filled with priests and poverty, with superstition and persecution, with war and woe. Common sense is banished from the minds

## IS THERE A REAL GOD?

of men and the dark ages of Christianity enshroud mankind in religious gloom.

At last the surging mind of man, in the name of intellectual freedom, shatters the power of the church. Reason returns, and men begin to investigate and learn. In the grand awakening, science is born. The universe is explored by patient searchers after truth, and everywhere is found the reign of natural law. The universe is found to be mechanical. Nowhere does it reflect the ideals and character of a god; nowhere can any trace of God be discovered. Thoughtful men and women come to regard the totality of nature as the one eternal being—as our mother, our teacher, and our tomb. The last god fades from the minds of millions and takes his place with the countless gods that are dead. Supernatural religion disappears, leaving a natural world, filled with enlightened men and women, to work for the improvement of mankind.

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE ?

Scientific inquiry into the origins of Christianity begins to-day with the question: "Did Jesus Christ really live?" Was there a man named Jesus, who was called the Christ, living in Palestine nineteen centuries ago, of whose life and teachings we have a correct account in the New Testament? The orthodox idea that Christ was the son of God—God himself in human form—that he was the creator of the countless millions of glowing suns and wheeling worlds that strew the infinite expanse of the universe; that the forces of nature were the servants of his will and changed their courses at his command—such an idea has been abandoned by every independent thinker in the world—by every thinker who relies on reason and experience rather than mere faith—by every man of science who places the integrity of nature above the challenge of ancient religious tales.

Not only has the divinity of Christ been given up, but his existence as a man is being more and more seriously questioned. Some of the ablest scholars of the world deny that he ever lived at

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

all. A commanding literature dealing with the inquiry, intense in its seriousness and profound and thorough in its research, is growing up in all countries, and spreading the conviction that Christ is a myth. The question is one of tremendous importance. For the Freethinker, as well as for the Christian, it is of the weightiest significance. The Christian religion has been and is a mighty fact in the world. For good or for ill, it has absorbed for many centuries the best energies of mankind. It has stayed the march of civilization, and made martyrs of some of the noblest men and women of the race: and it is to-day the greatest enemy of knowledge, of freedom, of social and industrial improvement, and of the genuine brotherhood of mankind. The progressive forces of the world are at war with this Asiatic superstition, and this war will continue until the triumph of truth and freedom is complete. The question, "Did Jesus Christ Really Live?" goes to the very root of the conflict between reason and faith; and upon its determination depends, to some degree, the decision as to whether religion or humanity shall rule the world.

Whether Christ did, or did not live, has nothing at all to do with what the churches teach, or with what we believe. It is wholly a matter of evidence. It is a question of science. The question is—what does history say? And that question must be settled in the court of historical criti-

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

cism. If the thinking world is to hold to the position that Christ was a real character, there must be sufficient evidence to warrant that belief. If no evidence for his existence can be found; if history returns the verdict that his name is not inscribed upon her scroll, if it be found that his story was created by art and ingenuity, like the stories of fictitious heroes, he will have to take his place with the host of other demigods whose fancied lives and deeds make up the mythology of the world.

What, then, is the evidence that Jesus Christ lived in this world as a man? The authorities relied upon to prove the reality of Christ are the four Gospels of the New Testament—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These Gospels, and these alone, tell the story of his life. Now we know absolutely nothing of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, apart from what is said of them in the Gospels. Moreover, the Gospels themselves do not claim to have been written by these men. They are not called “The Gospel of Matthew,” or “The Gospel of Mark,” but “The Gospel According to Matthew,” “The Gospel According to Mark,” “The Gospel According to Luke,” and “The Gospel According to John.” No human being knows who wrote a single line in one of these Gospels. No human being knows when they were written, or where. Biblical scholarship has established the fact that the Gospel of Mark is

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

the oldest of the four. The chief reasons for this conclusion are that this Gospel is shorter, simpler, and more natural, than any of the other three. It is shown that the Gospels of Matthew and Luke were enlarged from the Gospel of Mark. The Gospel of Mark knows nothing of the virgin birth, of the Sermon on the Mount, of the Lord's prayer, or of other important facts of the supposed life of Christ. These features were added by Matthew and Luke.

But the Gospel of Mark, as we have it, is not the original Mark. In the same way that the writers of Matthew and Luke copied and enlarged the Gospel of Mark, Mark copied and enlarged an earlier document which is called the "original Mark." This original source perished in the early age of the Church. What it was, who wrote it, where it was written, nobody knows. The Gospel of John is admitted by Christian scholars to be an unhistorical document. They acknowledge that it is not a life of Christ, but an interpretation of him; that it gives us an idealized and spiritualized picture of what Christ is supposed to have been, and that it is largely composed of the speculations of Greek philosophy. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, which are called the "Synoptic Gospels," on the one hand, and the Gospel of John, on the other, stand at opposite extremes of thought. So complete is the difference between the teaching of the first three Gos-

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

pels and that of the fourth, that every critic admits that if Jesus taught as the Synoptics relate, he could not possibly have taught as John declares. Indeed, in the first three Gospels and in the fourth, we meet with two entirely different Christs. Did I say two? It should be three; for, according to Mark, Christ was a man; according to Matthew and Luke, he was a demigod; while John insists that he was God himself.

There is not the smallest fragment of trustworthy evidence to show that any of the Gospels were in existence, in their present form, earlier than a hundred years after the time at which Christ is supposed to have died. Christian scholars, having no reliable means by which to fix the date of their composition, assign them to as early an age as their calculations and their guesses will allow; but the dates thus arrived at are far removed from the age of Christ or his apostles. We are told that Mark was written some time after the year 70, Luke about 110, Matthew about 130, and John not earlier than 140 A. D. Let me impress upon you that these dates are conjectural, and that they are made as early as possible. The first historical mention of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, was made by the Christian Father, St. Irenaeus, about the year 190 A. D. The only earlier mention of any of the Gospels was made by Theophilis of Antioch, who mentioned the Gospel of John in 180 A. D.

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

There is absolutely nothing to show that these Gospels—the only sources of authority as to the existence of Christ—were written until a hundred and fifty years after the events they pretend to describe. Walter R. Cassels, the learned author of “Supernatural Religion,” one of the greatest works ever written on the origins of Christianity, says: “After having exhausted the literature and the testimony bearing on the point, we have not found a single distinct trace of any of those Gospels during the first century and a half after the death of Christ.” How can Gospels which were not written until a hundred and fifty years after Christ is supposed to have died, and which do not rest on any trustworthy testimony, have the slightest value as evidence that he really lived? History must be founded upon genuine documents or on living proof. Were a man of to-day to attempt to write the life of a supposed character of a hundred and fifty years ago, without any historical documents upon which to base his narrative, his work would not be a history, it would be a romance. Not a single statement in it could be relied upon.

Christ is supposed to have been a Jew, and his disciples are said to have been Jewish fishermen. His language, and the language of his followers must, therefore, have been Aramaic—the popular language of Palestine in that age. But the Gospels are written in Greek—every one of

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

them. Nor were they translated from some other language. Every leading Christian scholar since Erasmus, four hundred years ago, has maintained that they were originally written in Greek. This proves that they were not written by Christ's disciples, or by any of the early Christians. Foreign Gospels, written by unknown men, in a foreign tongue, several generations after the death of those who are supposed to have known the facts—such is the evidence relied upon to prove that Jesus lived.

But while the Gospels were written several generations too late to be of authority, the original documents, such as they were, were not preserved. The Gospels that were written in the second century no longer exist. They have been lost or destroyed. The oldest Gospels that we have are supposed to be copies of copies of copies that were made from those Gospels. We do not know who made these copies; we do not know when they were made; nor do we know whether they were honestly made. Between the earliest Gospels and the oldest existing manuscripts of the New Testament, there is a blank gulf of three hundred years. It is, therefore, impossible to say what the original Gospels contained.

There were many Gospels in circulation in the early centuries, and a large number of them were forgeries. Among these were the "Gospel of Paul," the "Gospel of Bartholomew," the "Gos-

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

pel of Judas Iscariot," the "Gospel of the Egyptians," the "Gospel or Recollections of Peter," the "Oracles or Sayings of Christ," and scores of other pious productions, a collection of which may still be read in "The Apocryphal New Testament." Obscure men wrote Gospels and attached the names of prominent Christian characters to them, to give them the appearance of importance. Works were forged in the names of the apostles, and even in the name of Christ. The greatest Christian teachers taught that it was a virtue to deceive and lie for the glory of the faith. Dean Milman, the standard Christian historian, says: "Pious fraud was admitted and avowed." The Rev. Dr. Giles writes: "There can be no doubt that great numbers of books were then written with no other view than to deceive." Professor Robertson Smith says: "There was an enormous floating mass of spurious literature created to suit party views." The early church was flooded with spurious religious writings. From this mass of literature, our Gospels were selected by priests and called the inspired word of God. Were these Gospels also forged? There is no certainty that they were not. But let me ask: If Christ was an historical character, why was it necessary to forge documents to prove his existence? Did anybody ever think of forging documents to prove the existence of any person who was really known to have lived? The early Christian forgeries are a

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

tremendous testimony to the weakness of the Christian cause.

Spurious or genuine, let us see what the Gospels can tell us about the life of Jesus. Matthew and Luke give us the story of his genealogy. How do they agree? Matthew says there were forty-one generations from Abraham to Jesus. Luke says there were fifty-six. Yet both pretend to give the genealogy of Joseph, and both count the generations! Nor is this all. The Evangelists disagree on all but two names between David and Christ. These worthless genealogies show how much the New Testament writers knew about the ancestors of their hero.

If Jesus lived, he must have been born. When was he born? Matthew says he was born when Herod was King of Judea. Luke says he was born when Cyrenius was Governor of Syria. He could not have been born during the administration of these two rulers for Herod died in the year 4 B. C., and Cyrenius, who, in Roman history is Quirinius, did not become Governor of Syria until ten years later. Herod and Quirinius are separated by the whole reign of Archelaus, Herod's son. Between Matthew and Luke, there is, therefore, a contradiction of at least ten years, as to the time of Christ's birth. The fact is that the early Christians had absolutely no knowledge as to when Christ was born. The Encyclopaedia Britannica says: "Christians count one hundred and thirty-

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

three contrary opinions of different authorities concerning the year the Messiah appeared on earth.” Think of it—one hundred and thirty-three different years, each one of which is held to be the year in which Christ came into the world. What magnificent certainty!

Towards the close of the eighteenth century, Antonmaria Lupi, a learned Jesuit, wrote a work to show that the nativity of Christ has been assigned to every month in the year, at one time or another.

Where was Christ born? According to the Gospels, he was habitually called “Jesus of Nazareth.” The New Testament writers have endeavored to leave the impression that Nazareth of Galilee was his home town. The Synoptic Gospels represent that thirty years of his life were spent there. Notwithstanding this, Matthew declares that he was born in Bethlehem in fulfillment of a prophecy in the Book of Micah. But the prophecy of Micah has nothing whatever to do with Jesus; it prophesies the coming of a military leader, not a divine teacher. Matthew’s application of this prophecy to Christ strengthens the suspicion that his Gospel is not history, but romance. Luke has it that his birth occurred at Bethlehem, whither his mother had gone with her husband, to make the enrollment called for by Augustus Caesar. Of the general census mentioned by Luke, nothing is known in Roman history.

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

But suppose such a census was taken. The Roman custom, when an enrollment was made, was that every man was to report at his place of residence. The head of the family alone made report. In no case was his wife, or any dependent, required to be with him. In the face of this established custom, Luke declares that Joseph left his home in Nazareth and crossed two provinces to go Bethlehem for the enrollment; and not only this, but that he had to be accompanied by his wife, Mary, who was on the very eve of becoming a mother. This surely is not history, but fable. The story that Christ was born at Bethlehem was a necessary part of the program which made him the Messiah, and the descendant of King David. The Messiah had to be born in Bethlehem, the city of David; and by what Renan calls a roundabout way, his birth was made to take place there. The story of his birth in the royal city is plainly fictitious.

His home was Nazareth. He was called "Jesus of Nazareth"; and there he is said to have lived until the closing years of his life. Now comes the question—Was there a city of Nazareth in that age? The Encyclopaedia Biblica, a work written by theologians, the greatest biblical reference work in the English language, says: "We cannot perhaps venture to assert positively that there was a city of Nazareth in Jesus' time." No certainty that there was a city of Nazareth! Not

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

only are the supposed facts of the life of Christ imaginary, but the city of his birth and youth and manhood existed, so far as we know, only on the map of mythology. What amazing evidence to prove the reality of a Divine man! Absolute ignorance as to his ancestry; nothing whatever known of the time of his birth, and even the existence of the city where he is said to have been born, a matter of grave question!

After his birth, Christ, as it were, vanishes out of existence, and with the exception of a single incident recorded in Luke, we hear absolutely nothing of him until he has reached the age of thirty years. The account of his being found discussing with the doctors in the Temple at Jerusalem when he was but twelve years old, is told by Luke alone. The other Gospels are utterly ignorant of this discussion; and, this single incident excepted, the four Gospels maintain an unbroken silence with regard to thirty years of the life of their hero. What is the meaning of this silence? If the writers of the Gospels knew the facts of the life of Christ, why is it that they tell us absolutely nothing of thirty years of that life? What historical character can be named whose life for thirty years is an absolute blank to the world? If Christ was the incarnation of God, if he was the greatest teacher the world has known, if he came to save mankind from everlasting pain—was there nothing worth remembering in the first

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

thirty years of his existence among men? The fact is that the Evangelists knew nothing of the life of Jesus, before his ministry; and they refrained from inventing a childhood, youth and early manhood for him because it was not necessary to their purpose.

Luke, however, deviated from the rule of silence long enough to write the Temple incident. The story of the discussion with the doctors in the Temple is proved to be mythical by all the circumstances that surround it. The statement that his mother and father left Jerusalem, believing that he was with them; that they went a day's journey before discovering that he was not in their company; and that after searching for three days, they found him in the Temple asking and answering questions of the learned Doctors, involves a series of tremendous improbabilities. Add to this the fact that the incident stands alone in Luke, surrounded by a period of silence covering thirty years; add further that none of the other writers have said a word of the child Jesus discussing with the scholars of their nation; and add again the unlikelihood that a child would appear before serious-minded men in the role of an intellectual champion and the fabulous character of the story becomes perfectly clear.

The Gospels know nothing of thirty years of Christ's life. What do they know of the last years of that life? How long did the ministry,

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

the public career of Christ, continue? According to Matthew, Mark and Luke, the public life of Christ lasted about a year. If John's Gospel is to be believed, his ministry covered about three years. The Synoptics teach that Christ's public work was confined almost entirely to Galilee, and that he went to Jerusalem only once, not long before his death. John is in hopeless disagreement with the other Evangelists as to the scene of Christ's labors. He maintains that most of the public life of Christ was spent in Judea, and that Christ was many times in Jerusalem. Now, between Galilee and Judea there was the province of Samaria. If all but the last few weeks of Christ's ministry was carried on in his native province of Galilee, it is certain that the greater part of that ministry was not spent in Judea, two provinces away.

John tells us that the driving of the money-changers from the Temple occurred at the beginning of Christ's ministry; and nothing is said of any serious consequences following it. But Matthew, Mark and Luke declare that the purification of the Temple took place at the close of his career, and that this act brought upon him the wrath of the priests, who sought to destroy him. Because of these facts, the *Encyclopedia Biblica* assures us that the order of events in the life of Christ, as given by the Evangelists, is contradictory and untrustworthy; that the chronological

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

framework of the Gospels is worthless; and that the facts "show only too clearly with what lack of concern for historical precision the Evangelists write." In other words, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John wrote, not what they knew, but what they imagined.

Christ is said to have been many times in Jerusalem. It is said that he preached daily in the Temple. He was followed by his twelve disciples, and by multitudes of enthusiastic men and women. On the one hand, the people shouted hosannas in his honor, and on the other, priests engaged him in discussion and sought to take his life. All this shows that he must have been well known to the authorities. Indeed, he must have been one of the best known men in Jerusalem. Why, then, was it necessary for the priests to bribe one of his disciples to betray him? Only an obscure man, whose identity was uncertain, or a man who was in hiding, would need to be betrayed. A man who appeared daily in the streets, who preached daily in the Temple, a man who was continually before the public eye, could have been arrested at any moment. The priests would not have bribed a man to betray a teacher whom everybody knew. If the accounts of Christ's betrayal are true, all the declarations about his public appearances in Jerusalem must be false.

Nothing could be more improbable than the story of Christ's crucifixion. The civilization of

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

Rome was the highest in the world. The Romans were the greatest lawyers the world had ever known. Their courts were models of order and fairness. A man was not condemned without a trial; he was not handed to the executioner before being found guilty. And yet we are asked to believe that an innocent man was brought before a Roman court, where Pontius Pilate was Judge; that no charge of wrongdoing having been brought against him, the Judge declared that he found him innocent; that the mob shouted, "Crucify him; crucify him!" and that to please the rabble, Pilate commanded that the man who had done no wrong and whom he had found innocent, should be scourged, and then delivered him to the executioners to be crucified! Is it thinkable that the master of a Roman court in the days of Tiberius Caesar, having found a man innocent and declared him so, and having made efforts to save his life, tortured him of his own accord, and then handed him over to a howling mob to be nailed to a cross? A Roman court finding a man innocent and then crucifying him! Is that a picture of civilized Rome? Is that the Rome to which the world owes its laws? In reading the story of the Crucifixion, are we reading history or religious fiction? Surely not history.

On the theory that Christ was crucified, how shall we explain the fact that during the first eight centuries of the evolution of Christianity, Chris-

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

tian art represented a lamb, and not a man, as suffering on the cross for the salvation of the world? Neither the paintings in the Catacombs nor the sculptures on Christian tombs pictured a human figure on the cross. Everywhere a lamb was shown as the Christian symbol—a lamb carrying a cross, a lamb at the foot of a cross, a lamb on a cross. Some figures showed the lamb with a human head, shoulders and arms, holding a cross in his hands—the lamb of God in process of assuming the human form—the crucifixion myth becoming realistic. At the close of the eighth century, Pope Hadrian I, confirming the decree of the sixth Synod of Constantinople, commanded that thereafter the figure of a man should take the place of a lamb on the cross. It took Christianity eight hundred years to develop the symbol of its suffering Savior. For eight hundred years, the Christ on the cross was a lamb. But if Christ was actually crucified, why was his place on the cross so long usurped by a lamb? In the light of history and reason, and in view of a lamb on the cross, why should we believe in the Crucifixion?

And let us ask, if Christ performed the miracles the New Testament describes, if he gave sight to blind men's eyes, if his magic touch brought youthful vigor to the palsied frame, if the putrefying dead at his command returned to life and love again—why did the people want him crucified? Is it not amazing that a civilized peo-

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

ple—for the Jews of that age were civilized—were so filled with murderous hate towards a kind and loving man who went about doing good, who preached forgiveness, cleansed the leprous, and raised the dead—that they could not be appeased until they had crucified the noblest benefactor of mankind? Again I ask—is this history, or is it fiction?

From the standpoint of the supposed facts, the account of the Crucifixion of Christ is as impossible as is the raising of Lazarus from the standpoint of nature. The simple truth is, that the four Gospels are historically worthless. They abound in contradictions, in the unreasonable, the miraculous and the monstrous. There is not a thing in them that can be depended upon as true, while there is much in them that we certainly know to be false.

The accounts of the virgin birth of Christ, of his feeding five thousand people with five loaves and two fishes, of his cleansing the leprous, of his walking on the water, of his raising the dead, and of his own resurrection after his life had been destroyed, are as untrue as any stories that were ever told in this world. The miraculous element in the Gospels is proof that they were written by men, who did not know how to write history, or who were not particular as to the truth of what they wrote. The miracles of the Gospels were invented by credulity or cunning, and if the mir-

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

acles were invented, how can we know that the whole history of Christ was not woven of the warp and woof of the imagination? Dr. Paul W. Schmiedel, Professor of New Testament Exegesis at Zurich, Switzerland, one of the foremost theologians of Europe, tells us in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, that there are only nine passages in the Gospels that we can depend upon as being the sayings of Jesus; and Professor Arthur Drews, Germany's greatest exponent of the doctrine that Christ is a myth, analyses these passages and shows that there is nothing in them that could not easily have been invented. That these passages are as unhistorical as the rest is also the contention of John M. Robertson, the eminent English scholar, who holds that Jesus never lived.

Let me make a startling disclosure. Let me tell you that the New Testament itself contains the strongest possible proof that the Christ of the Gospels was not a real character. The testimony of the Epistles of Paul demonstrates that the life story of Jesus is an invention. Of course, there is no certainty that Paul really lived. Let me quote a passage from the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, relative to Paul: "It is true that the picture of Paul drawn by later times differs utterly in more or fewer of its details from the original. Legend has made itself master of his person. The simple truth has been mixed up with invention; Paul has become the hero of an admiring band of the

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

more highly developed Christians." Thus Christian authority admits that invention has done its work in manufacturing at least in part, the life of Paul. In truth, the ablest Christian scholars reject all but four of the Pauline Epistles as spurious. Some maintain that Paul was not the author of any of them. The very existence of Paul is questionable.

But for the purpose of my argument, I am going to admit that Paul really lived; that he was a zealous apostle; and that all the Epistles are from his pen. There are thirteen of these Epistles. Some of them are lengthy; and they are acknowledged to be the oldest Christian writings. They were written long before the Gospels. If Paul really wrote them, they were written by a man who lived in Jerusalem when Christ is supposed to have been teaching there. Now, if the facts of the life of Christ were known in the first century of Christianity, Paul was one of the men who should have known them fully. Yet Paul acknowledges that he never saw Jesus; and his Epistles prove that he knew nothing about his life, his works, or his teachings.

In all the Epistles of Paul, there is not one word about Christ's virgin birth. The apostle is absolutely ignorant of the marvellous manner in which Jesus is said to have come into the world. For this silence, there can be only one honest explanation—the story of the virgin birth had not

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

yet been invented when Paul wrote. A large portion of the Gospels is devoted to accounts of the miracles Christ is said to have wrought. But you will look in vain through the thirteen Epistles of Paul for the slightest hint that Christ ever performed any miracles. Is it conceivable that Paul was acquainted with the miracles of Christ—that he knew that Christ had cleansed the leprous, cast out devils that could talk, restored sight to the blind and speech to the dumb, and even raised the dead—is it conceivable that Paul was aware of these wonderful things and yet failed to write a single line about them? Again, the only solution is that the accounts of the miracles wrought by Jesus had not yet been invented when Paul's Epistles were written.

Not only is Paul silent about the virgin birth and the miracles of Jesus, he is without the slightest knowledge of the teaching of Jesus. The Christ of the Gospels preached a famous sermon on a mountain: Paul knows nothing of it. Christ delivered a prayer now recited by the Christian world: Paul never heard of it. Christ taught in parables: Paul is utterly unacquainted with any of them. Is not this astonishing? Paul, the greatest writer of early Christianity, the man who did more than any other to establish the Christian religion in the world—that is, if the Epistles may be trusted—is absolutely ignorant of the teaching of Christ. In all of his thirteen Epistles he

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

does not quote a single saying of Jesus.

Paul was a missionary. He was out for converts. Is it thinkable that if the teachings of Christ had been known to him, he would not have made use of them in his propaganda? Can you believe that a Christian missionary would go to China and labor for many years to win converts to the religion of Christ, and never once mention the Sermon on the Mount, never whisper a word about the Lord's Prayer, never tell the story of one of the parables, and remain as silent as the grave about the precepts of his master? What have the churches been teaching throughout the Christian centuries if not these very things? Are not the churches of to-day continually preaching about the virgin birth, the miracles, the parables, and the precepts of Jesus? And do not these features constitute Christianity? Is there any life of Christ, apart from these things? Why, then, does Paul know nothing of them? There is but one answer. The virgin-born, miracle-working, preaching Christ was unknown to the world in Paul's day. That is to say, he had not yet been invented!

The Christ of Paul and the Jesus of the Gospels are two entirely different beings. The Christ of Paul is little more than an idea. He has no life story. He was not followed by the multitude. He performed no miracles. He did no preaching. The Christ Paul knew was the Christ he saw in a

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

vision while on his way to Damascus—an apparition, a phantom, not a living, human being, who preached and worked among men. This vision-Christ, this ghostly word, was afterwards brought to the earth by those who wrote the Gospels. He was given a Holy Ghost for a father and a virgin for a mother. He was made to preach, to perform astounding miracles, to die a violent death though innocent, and to rise in triumph from the grave and ascend again to heaven. Such is the Christ of the New Testament—first a spirit, and later a miraculously born, miracle working man, who is master of death and whom death cannot subdue.

A large body of opinion in the early church denied the reality of Christ's physical existence. In his "History of Christianity," Dean Milman writes: "The Gnostic sects denied that Christ was born at all, or that he died," and Mosheim, Germany's great ecclesiastical historian, says: "The prevalent opinion among early Christians was that Christ existed in appearance only." The Christ of early Christianity was not a human being, but an "appearance," an illusion, a character in miracle, not in reality—a myth.

Miracles do not happen. Stories of miracles are untrue. Therefore, documents in which miraculous accounts are interwoven with reputed facts, are untrustworthy, for those who invented the miraculous element might easily have in-

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

vanted the part that was natural. Men are common; Gods are rare; therefore, it is at least as easy to invent the biography of a man as the history of a God. For this reason, the whole story of Christ—the human element as well as the divine—is without valid claim to be regarded as true. If miracles are fictions, Christ is a myth. Said Dean Farrar: “If miracles be incredible, Christianity is false.” Bishop Westcott wrote: “The essence of Christianity lies in a miracle; and if it can be shown that a miracle is either impossible or incredible, all further inquiry into the details of its history is superfluous.” Not only are miracles incredible, but the uniformity of nature declares them to be impossible. Miracles have gone: the miraculous Christ cannot remain.

If Christ lived, if he was a reformer, if he performed wonderful works that attracted the attention of the multitude, if he came in conflict with the authorities and was crucified—how shall we explain the fact that history has not even recorded his name? The age in which he is said to have lived was an age of scholars and thinkers. In Greece, Rome and Palestine, there were philosophers, historians, poets, orators, jurists and statesmen. Every fact of importance was noted by interested and inquiring minds. Some of the greatest writers the Jewish race has produced lived in that age. And yet, in all the writings of that period, there is not one line, not one word,

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

not one letter, about Jesus. Great writers wrote extensively of events of minor importance, but not one of them wrote a word about the mightiest character who had ever appeared on earth—a man at whose command the leprous were made clean, a man who fed five thousand people with a satchel full of bread, a man whose word defied the grave and gave life to the dead.

John E. Remsburg, in his scholarly work on “The Christ,” has compiled a list of forty-two writers who lived and wrote during the time or within a century after the time, of Christ, not one of whom ever mentioned him.

Philo, one of the most renowned writers the Jewish race has produced, was born before the beginning of the Christian Era, and lived for many years after the time at which Jesus is supposed to have died. His home was in or near Jerusalem, where Jesus is said to have preached, to have performed miracles, to have been crucified, and to have risen from the dead. Had Jesus done these things, the writings of Philo would certainly contain some record of his life. Yet this philosopher, who must have been familiar with Herod’s massacre of the innocents, and with the preaching, miracles and death of Jesus, had these things occurred; who wrote an account of the Jews, covering this period, and discussed the very questions that are said to have been near to Christ’s heart, never once mentioned the name of,

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

or any deed connected with, the reputed Savior of the world.

In the closing years of the first century, Josephus, the celebrated Jewish historian, wrote his famous work on "The Antiquities of the Jews." In this work, the historian made no mention of Christ, and for two hundred years after the death of Josephus, the name of Christ did not appear in his history. There were no printing presses in those days. Books were multiplied by being copied. It was, therefore, easy to add to or change what an author had written. The church felt that Josephus ought to recognize Christ, and the dead historian was made to do it. In the fourth century, a copy of "The Antiquities of the Jews" appeared, in which occurred this passage: "Now, there was about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works; a teacher of such men as received the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was the Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day."

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

Such is the celebrated reference to Christ in Josephus. A more brazen forgery was never perpetrated. For more than two hundred years, the Christian Fathers who were familiar with the works of Josephus knew nothing of this passage. Had the passage been in the works of Josephus which they knew, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Origen and Clement of Alexandria would have been eager to hurl it at their Jewish opponents in their many controversies. But it did not exist. Indeed, Origen, who knew his Josephus well, expressly affirmed that that writer had not acknowledged Christ. This passage first appeared in the writings of the Christian Father Eusebius, the first historian of Christianity, early in the fourth century; and it is believed that he was its author. Eusebius, who not only advocated fraud in the interest of the faith, but who is known to have tampered with passages in the works of Josephus and several other writers, introduces this passage in his "Evangelical Demonstration," (Book III., p. 124), in these words: "Certainly the attestations I have already produced concerning our Savior may be sufficient. However, it may not be amiss, if, over and above, we make use of Josephus the Jew for a further witness."

Everything demonstrates the spurious character of the passage. It is written in the style of Eusebius, and not in the style of Josephus. Josephus was a voluminous writer. He wrote exten-

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

sively about men of minor importance. The brevity of this reference to Christ is, therefore, a strong argument for its falsity. This passage interrupts the narrative. It has nothing to do with what precedes or what follows it; and its position clearly shows that the text of the historian has been separated by a later hand to give it room. Josephus was a Jew—a priest of the religion of Moses. This passage makes him acknowledge the divinity, the miracles, and the resurrection of Christ—that is to say, it makes an orthodox Jew talk like a believing Christian! Josephus could not possibly have written these words without being logically compelled to embrace Christianity. All the arguments of history and of reason unite in the conclusive proof that the passage is an unblushing forgery.

For these reasons every honest Christian scholar has abandoned it as an interpolation. Dean Milman says: “It is interpolated with many additional clauses.” Dean Farrar, writing in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, says: “That Josephus wrote the whole passage as it now stands no sane critic can believe.” Bishop Warburton denounced it as “a rank forgery and a very stupid one, too.” Chambers’ Encyclopaedia says: “The famous passage of Josephus is generally conceded to be an interpolation.”

In the “Annals” of Tacitus, the Roman historian, there is another short passage which

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

speaks of “Christus” as being the founder of a party called Christians—a body of people “who were abhorred for their crimes.” These words occur in Tacitus’ account of the burning of Rome. The evidence for this passage is not much stronger than that for the passage in Josephus. It was not quoted by any writer before the fifteenth century; and when it was quoted, there was only one copy of the “Annals” in the world; and that copy was supposed to have been made in the eighth century—six hundred years after Tacitus’ death. The “Annals” were published between 115 and 117 A. D., nearly a century after Jesus’ time—so the passage, even if genuine, would not prove anything as to Jesus.

The name “Jesus” was as common among the Jews as is William or George with us. In the writings of Josephus, we find accounts of a number of Jesuses. One was Jesus, the son of Sapphias, the founder of a seditious band of mariners; another was Jesus, the captain of the robbers whose followers fled when they heard of his arrest; still another Jesus was a monomaniac who for seven years went about Jerusalem, crying, “Woe, woe, woe unto Jerusalem!” who was bruised and beaten many times, but offered no resistance; and who was finally killed with a stone at the siege of Jerusalem.

The word “Christ,” the Greek equivalent of the Jewish word “Messiah,” was not a personal

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

name; it was a title; it meant "the Anointed One."

The Jews were looking for a Messiah, a successful political leader, who would restore the independence of their nation. Josephus tells us of many men who posed as Messiahs, who obtained a following among the people, and who were put to death by the Romans for political reasons. One of these Messiahs, or Christs, a Samaritan prophet, was executed under Pontius Pilate; and so great was the indignation of the Jews that Pilate had to be recalled by the Roman government.

These facts are of tremendous significance. While the Jesus Christ of Christianity is unknown to history, the age in which he is said to have lived was an age in which many men bore the name of "Jesus" and many political leaders assumed the title of "Christ." All the materials necessary for the manufacture of the story of Christ existed in that age. In all the ancient countries, divine Saviors were believed to have been born of virgins, to have preached a new religion, to have performed miracles, to have been crucified as atonements for the sins of mankind, and to have risen from the grave and ascended into heaven. All that Jesus is supposed to have taught was in the literature of the time. In the story of Christ there is not a new idea, as Joseph McCabe has shown in his "Sources of the Morality of the Gospels," and John M. Robertson in his "Pagan Christs."

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

“But,” says the Christian, “Christ is so perfect a character that he could not have been invented.” This is a mistake. The Gospels do not portray a perfect character. The Christ of the Gospels is shown to be artificial by the numerous contradictions in his character and teachings. He was in favor of the sword, and he was not; he told men to love their enemies, and advised them to hate their friends; he preached the doctrine of forgiveness, and called men a generation of vipers; he announced himself as the judge of the world, and declared that he would judge no man; he taught that he was possessed of all power, but was unable to work miracles where the people did not believe; he was represented as God and did not shrink from avowing, “I and my Father are one,” but in the pain and gloom of the cross, he is made to cry out in his anguish: “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” And how singular it is that these words, reputed as the dying utterance of the disillusioned Christ, should be not only contradicted by two Evangelists, but should be a quotation from the twenty-second Psalm!

If there is a moment when a man’s speech is original, it is when, amid agony and despair, while his heart is breaking beneath its burden of defeat and disappointment, he utters a cry of grief from the depth of his wounded soul with the last breath that remains before the chill waves of death en-

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

gulf his wasted life forever. But on the lips of the expiring Christ are placed, not the heart-felt words of a dying man, but a quotation from the literature of his race!

A being with these contradictions, these transparent unrealities in his character, could scarcely have been real.

And if Christ, with all that is miraculous and impossible in his nature, could not have been invented, what shall we say of Othello, of Hamlet, of Romeo? Do not Shakespeare's wondrous characters live upon the stage? Does not their naturalness, their consistency, their human grandeur, challenge our admiration? And is it not with difficulty that we believe them to be children of the imagination? Laying aside the miraculous, in the story of the Jewish hero, is not the character of Jean Valjean as deep, as lofty, as broad, as rich in its humanity, as tender in its pathos, as sublime in its heroism, and as touchingly resigned to the cruelties of fate as the character of Jesus? Who has read the story of that marvelous man without being thrilled? And who has followed him through his last days with dry eyes? And yet Jean Valjean never lived and never died; he was not a real man, but the personification of suffering virtue born in the effulgent brain of Victor Hugo. Have you not wept when you have seen Sydney Carton disguise himself and lay his neck beneath the blood-stained knife of the guillotine,

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

to save the life of Evremonde? But Sydney Carton was not an actual human being; he is the heroic, self-sacrificing spirit of humanity clothed in human form by the genius of Charles Dickens.

Yes, the character of Christ could have been invented! The literature of the world is filled with invented characters; and the imaginary lives of the splendid men and women of fiction will forever arrest the interest of the mind and hold the heart enthralled. But how account for Christianity if Christ did not live? Let me ask another question. How account for the Renaissance, for the Reformation, for the French Revolution, or for Socialism? Not one of these movements was created by an individual. They grew. Christianity grew. The Christian church is older than the oldest Christian writings. Christ did not produce the church. The church produced the story of Christ.

The Jesus Christ of the Gospels could not possibly have been a real person. He is a combination of impossible elements. There may have lived in Palestine, nineteen centuries ago, a man whose name was Jesus, who went about doing good, who was followed by admiring associates, and who in the end met a violent death. But of this possible person, not a line was written when he lived, and of his life and character the world of to-day knows absolutely nothing. This Jesus, if he lived, was a man; and if he was a reformer, he was but one

## DID JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVE?

of the many that have lived and died in every age of the world. When the world shall have learned that the Christ of the Gospels is a myth, that Christianity is untrue, it will turn its attention from the religious fictions of the past to the vital problems of to-day, and endeavor to solve them for the improvement of the well-being of the real men and women whom we know, and whom we ought to help and love.

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD ?

The corner stone of Christianity is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If Christ did not rise from the dead, Christianity crumbles. Prove that Christ did not rise from the dead, and you prove that Christianity is but a superstition—a superstition born of ignorance and credulity, of piety and fraud, of weakness and cunning, of priestcraft and persecution—a superstition that must disappear as fast as its real character is found out.

I purpose to examine in this lecture what is called the evidence for the resurrection of Christ. Truth always gains from being investigated; it is error alone that shrinks from inquiry.

The doctrine of the resurrection from the dead is far older than Christianity. Thousands of years before the preaching peasant of Palestine was born, India, Egypt, Babylonia—all the ancient countries, indeed—knew the story of the resurrection. These countries, whose religions were of great antiquity, had numerous gods. They had virgin-born saviors who were the sons of their gods. These saviors, while they lived, preached

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

and worked miracles, and after their death, they arose again and ascended into heaven.

All the doctrines of Christianity are far older than Christ; and all that can be said in favor of the resurrection of Christ can be said in favor of the resurrection of a dozen other saviors. Let us consider for a moment the resurrection of some of these pagan gods.

About twelve centuries before Christ was born—and there is no certainty at all that he ever *was* born—Chrishna, the crucified Hindoo savior, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. Attended by celestial spirits, amid the wondrous illumination of heaven and earth, Chrishna, the savior of men, slowly rose from earth to Paradise, while witnesses exclaimed with joy: “Lo, Chrishna’s soul ascends its native skies.”

Five centuries before Christ, the great Buddha, the founder of Buddhism—a religion that now embraces one-third of the human race—lay dead in India. From heaven’s supreme God came the command: “Rise, Holy Love!” Then the shroud of Buddha unrolled itself; by divine power the lid of his coffin was removed; and Buddha, the Enlightened One, the savior of mankind, released from the grip of death, rose to heaven’s glory.

Ancient Egypt worshipped the risen Osiris. Mr. Bonwick, in his “Egyptian Belief,” says: “It is astonishing to find that, at least five thousand years ago, men trusted in Osiris as the ‘risen sav-

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

ior' and confidently hoped to rise, as he arose, from the grave." Among the Greeks, Aesculapius, the son of God, the savior, the divine healer,—he who was called the "Great Physician"—after being put to death, rose in triumph from the grave. In the following manner, the poet Ovid makes the mother of Aesculapius tell in prophetic form, the story of the life, death and resurrection of her divine child:

"Once, as the sacred infant she surveyed,  
The god was kindled in the raving maid;  
And thus she uttered her prophetic tale:  
Hail, great Physician of the world! all hail!  
Hail, mighty infant, who in years to come  
Shall heal the nations, and defraud the tomb!  
Swift be thy growth, thy triumphs unconfined,  
Make kingdoms thicker, and increase mankind.  
Thy daring art shall animate the dead,  
And draw the thunder on thy guilty head;  
*Then shalt thou die, but from the dark abode*  
*Shalt rise victorious, and be twice a god.*" ]

The resurrection of gods was a fundamental idea in the religions of all the nations by which the Jews were surrounded. With these religions the Jews were familiar, and from them they borrowed many ideas. For example, the worship of Adonis, the virgin-born savior of the Syrians, was well known to the Jews long before the time of Christ. The Jews themselves worshipped Adonis. This was a part of the idolatry into which they were continually lapsing. In the Hebrew, the word "Adonis," means "Our Lord"; and this god

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

had an altar in the very temple of Jehovah at Jerusalem. The resurrection of Adonis was annually celebrated in Judea—in Bethlehem, indeed—even as late as 386 A.D. St. Jerome says: “Over Bethlehem (in the year 386 after Christ) the grove of Tammuz, that is, of Adonis, was casting its shadow! And in the grotto where formerly the infant Anointed (*i. e.*, Christ Jesus) cried, the lover of Venus was being mourned.” Observe the significance of this declaration. In the grotto, the cave, where Jesus cried, Adonis, says this Christian Father, was mourned. For centuries the church had a tradition that Christ was born in a cave. Among the Fathers of the church, who believed that tradition, was St. Jerome, the learned ecclesiastic who translated the Latin Vulgate of the Bible, and thus gave the Christian world its “Word of God.” This saint tells us that nearly four hundred years after the birth of Christ, the death and resurrection of Adonis, the mythical savior of the Syrians, were observed in the very cave where the Christian savior was believed to have been born. But there is another thing worth noting in connection with the death and resurrection of Adonis, and that is that according to the learned author of that masterpiece of scholarship—“Bible Myths and their Parallels in other Religions”—the celebration of the resurrection of Adonis, became the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Is there any won-

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

der that orthodox churches are silent about the science of comparative religions, when that science proves that our reputed divine religion is but a pagan superstition under another name? How could the clergy preach about the uniqueness of Christ if their congregations were familiar with Kersey Graves' learned work, "The World's Sixteen Crucified Saviors?"

For if the story of the resurrection of a god who was the son of a god is far older than Christianity, if thousands of millions of people in India, Egypt, Babylonia, Persia, Greece and Rome lived and died in the conviction that savior gods had risen from the dead in their behalf, and if these resurrection stories were well known to the people among whom Christianity arose, how can we be certain that the account of Christ's resurrection is not the ancient myth told again?

The worship of Osiris continued for about six thousand years. During that time thousands of millions of Egyptians implicitly believed that he had risen from the dead. Christianity is less than two thousand years old; and the resurrection of Christ is rejected to-day by nearly every human being who has impartially examined its claims. By what criterion, then, shall we decide that the resurrection of Osiris was a fable, while the resurrection of Christ was a fact? Buddhism is at this hour the religion of five hundred million human beings. Christianity in all its forms cannot num-

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

ber one million *intelligent* believers—people who know what they believe, and why they believe it; people who have examined the foundations of their faith, and are satisfied that those foundations are sound. By what standard, I ask again, are we justified in determining that the Buddhists are mistaken about the resurrection of their savior, and that the Christian belief is founded upon a revelation from God? Is a religion false merely because it happens to be another man's religion? Is my religion true simply because it is mine? Buddha, according to Buddhism, arose from the dead, five hundred years before Christ was born. Does that make the story of his resurrection false? Buddhism is the religion of more than twice as many people as seriously profess Christianity. Does that prove that Buddha did not rise from the dead, but that Christ did? Why, my Christian friend, do you reject as false the divine resurrections of the old religions, and accept as true the resurrection story of the religion of yesterday?

Will you answer by saying that Buddha was only a man, and, therefore, could not rise from the dead; that Christ was God, and as God, conquered the grave? Let me show you that this is the position you must take; I shall also show you that you can not maintain it. If Christ was only a man, his death was only a human death, and therefore could not be an atonement for the sins of the world. Christianity teaches that Christ

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

was God; that his sacrifice was divine and infinite; and that as God, he rose from the dead. But if Christ was God, how could he die? How could a few moments' suffering destroy the infinite resources of a God's longevity? How could a God's infinite hold on life be conquered by the frail means used to overcome the life of a man? Nothing could be more flagrantly absurd than the idea that a God was put to death by piercing the hands and feet of a Jewish peasant!

But let us suppose that God did die. Let us suppose that the creator of the universe threw his life away, and allowed the crucifixion to reduce him to the cold, pathetic stillness of death. God was dead! They buried him! God lay dead in the tomb! Well, how did he come to life again? Who, or what, resurrected him? A dead God becomes a living God—by what means? Could he thrill his nerves with the melody of life when he was dead? Could he, in death, re-animate with infinite designs the brain from which all consciousness had fled? If he could not return himself to life, what in the universe could restore him? There was no other God to resurrect him. He was the *only* God, and he was dead! Think of the audacity of the superstition that would attempt to paralyze our faculties and dwarf our minds, pervert our emotions and benumb our powers of perception, by having us believe that a God of infinite wisdom and power—grand, wondrous and

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

sublime in the wealth of his everlasting mastery of a boundless universe—came down among the ancient Jews; allowed them to nail him to a cross; threw away his life with the recklessness of a gamester; was buried in a hole in a rock just outside of Jerusalem; and there, while dead, infused himself with life again; fled from his tomb, and flew back to heaven! No Arabian tale, no story ever invented to scare children, could be more absurdly false than this fundamental fable of Christianity. How apropos are the words of Shakespeare: “In religion, what damned error; but some sober brow will bless it and approve it with a text; hiding its grossness with fair ornament.” If Christ was a man, he did not rise from the dead, for dead men have the uniform habit of staying dead. If he was God, he could not and did not die, and therefore, he could not and did not rise from the dead.

There is another point I wish to bring before you. Suppose there was a Jewish reformer named Jesus two thousand years ago; suppose his enemies succeeded in bringing him to the cross; how can it be known that he died in the crucifixion? According to the Gospel of Luke, Christ was on the cross about three hours. If Mark is correct, he hung on the cross about six hours. It is altogether improbable that a man should have died of crucifixion in that length of time. Crucifixion was a long-drawn-out agony. The victim died.

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

not from the loss of blood, but from the protracted nervous strain and from hunger. Frequently, the crucified lived on the cross for several days. A Negro slave, crucified in Jamaica in 1760, lived on the cross for two hundred and ten hours—nearly nine days. In Kitto's "Biblical Encyclopedia," a standard orthodox work, it is said that "We may consider thirty-six hours to be the earliest period at which crucifixion would occasion death in a healthy adult." Now *if a healthy man would live at least thirty-six hours on a cross, how shall we explain the death of Christ in three or six hours?* Was Christ a weakling? Did he lack average health and endurance? Why did he die in so short a time? Again, we are told that the soldiers broke the legs of the thieves, who were crucified with him, but his legs were not broken. This makes it more difficult to believe that he should have died so early; and quite reasonable to suppose that these unbroken legs may have enabled him to get away later on! It is said, however, that he was speared in the side, and that blood and water came from the wound. But nothing is said as to the seriousness of this wound. It was only in the side, and there is no intimation that it touched any vital organ, or was more than a slight flesh wound. Moreover, science, voicing its conclusion in Dr. Schmiedel's article on "John, Son of Zebedee," in the "Encyclopedia Biblica," declares that, "In spite of

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

all efforts, no one has yet been able to show that blood and water actually do flow from a wound of this kind." The Gospel fabulist was not up in his physiology!

When told that Christ was dead, Pilate marveled that he should have died in so short a time; and when the crucified was taken from the cross, he was not examined by physicians to ascertain whether he was really dead. No effort was made to determine whether the last spark of life had fled. No restoratives were administered. In view of these facts, who shall say that Christ was dead? How can we know that he had not swooned? How can we be sure that his disappointment and his pain had not banished consciousness from her throne while life remained? How can we be certain that he was not buried alive, but unconscious? He was not buried in the earth. He was laid in a sepulcher in a rock. Against the mouth of this tomb a stone was rolled. If he was yet alive he had air to breathe, and in a few hours he may have recovered consciousness. Perhaps the stone that stood between him and freedom was not too large for him to roll away; or his disciples, returning to the tomb in the night, may have heard his cry for assistance, and helped him to make his escape. On the other hand, if he was dead, they may have stolen away his body and buried it where none might find his grave. Either of these suppositions is infinitely more probable than that a dead

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

man or a dead God, rose from the dead. Men in pain have swooned; men have been buried alive; dead men have been stolen from their graves. These things are natural—within human experience. But all experience denies that a dead man ever became alive again; and the whole universe mocks the superstition that a God could die!

Do I hear some Christian say that the Roman soldiers guarded Jesus' tomb, and that, therefore, his disciples could not have stolen his body? Matthew is the only writer who mentions the Roman guard; and he assures us that the guard was not placed at the tomb until the second night. During the whole of the first night, there was no guard at the grave. What was there, then, to prevent Christ's escape, if he were alive, or his body from being taken away, if he were dead? Nothing! Admitting, therefore, that soldiers were stationed at Jesus' grave on the second night, as Matthew says; admitting also that they sealed the tomb, and stood guard until they were officially relieved of their watch, the story of the resurrection gains nothing, for he may have escaped, or been stolen away, during the first night, when, as yet, there was no guard about. In such a situation, we might reasonably suppose that the soldiers arrived a day too late, and that they guarded an empty tomb.

But there is something else to be said in connection with the guard. Who went to Pilate and

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

asked him to set a guard at the sepulcher? The chief priests and Pharisees—the Jewish Sanhedrin. Why did they ask for a guard? Matthew says they said to Pilate: “Lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say unto the people, he is risen from the dead.” Mark well this fact—the day after the crucifixion of Christ, the idea of his being stolen from the grave was, according to Matthew, in the minds of the Jewish leaders. Is not that significant? In assuring us that the Jews feared that the body of Jesus would be stolen, the “inspired” writer unwittingly suggests the solution of the empty tomb!

But was there really a guard at the sepulcher? Matthew alone say there was. The testimony of the other Gospels proves that there was not. That testimony is negative, positive and conclusive;—negative, in that neither Mark, nor Luke, nor John knows anything whatever of the guard—positive, in that according to Mark and Luke the women brought spices to anoint the body of Jesus, which they would not have done had they known that Roman soldiers stood sentinel at his grave,—conclusive, in that the women on reaching the tomb, said among themselves: “Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulcher?” The women saw no soldiers at the tomb, either to guard it or to roll from its portal the closing stone, because there were none there.

That the story of the watch is a myth is fur-

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

ther proved by Matthew's statement that the Jewish priests bribed the soldiers to say that, "His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept." The Roman soldier's devotion to duty has never been surpassed in the military annals of the world. Moreover, under the inflexible discipline of Roman militarism, the soldier who slept on duty was unceremoniously executed. Yet Matthew would have us believe that for a bribe, Roman soldiers not only sold out their honor, but exposed themselves to the certainty of immediate and ignominious death! This is not only a libel alike on the integrity and sanity of the martial character of Rome: it is an insult to the common sense of the world.

If yet further testimony be required to prove that there was no watch at the tomb, it is found in the fact that, according to the Gospels, nobody felt the need of one. Why? Because the disciples believed that Christ was dead, and that he would remain dead—because they knew nothing of his resurrection, and were not looking for it. Luke says that when the women told the disciples of the resurrection, "their words seemed to them (the disciples) as idle tales, and they believed them not." Why did the disciples refuse to believe? Let John answer: "*For as yet they knew not the Scripture that he must rise again from the dead.*" To whom is John referring particularly? To Peter and "the disciple whom Jesus

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

loved," and with them all the disciples. According to the Synoptic Gospels, Peter was the prince of the disciples; according to John, the chief disciple was the disciple whom Jesus loved—that is to say, John. These bosom companions of Jesus went and beheld his empty tomb. They were amazed to find it empty. Why? Because "they"—the foremost disciples who must have understood the mission of their master's life,—"knew not the Scripture that he must rise again from the dead."

Now let us ask: if the most intimate disciples of Christ, those who knew him best and were most devoted to him—those who had followed him throughout his whole career—if these had never heard of his coming resurrection, where did the Jewish priests get their suspicion that his disciples would claim he had risen from the dead? Did Christ go and apprise his enemies of a stupendous secret which he kept carefully guarded from his friends? The ministry of Christ lasted for one year, or for three—the Gospels are so full of contradictions that nothing definite can be learned from them—and during all that time, according to John, his disciples never heard from him that he was to rise from the dead. Yet the priests at Jerusalem, whom he had scarcely seen, knew all about the Christian doctrine of the resurrection! If the disciples were in ignorance as to a proposed resurrection, nothing could be more reasonably

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

certain than that the priests and Pharisees had never heard of it; and if these men of the Sanhedrin knew nothing of Christ's teaching that he would rise from the dead, they certainly did not ask Pilate to set a guard at the tomb.

I am, of course, aware that, according to Matthew, Jesus had said to the scribes and Pharisees: "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." But there are four decisive facts which prove the spurious character of this supposed prophecy. These facts are, first, that our knowledge of the origin of the Gospels makes it quite unreasonable to rely upon anything they contain as being the words of Christ; secondly, that this prophecy was unknown to the disciples, since, as the Gospels show, they did not anticipate the resurrection; thirdly, that according to the prophecy, Christ compared his prospective stay in the earth with the myth of Jonas' sojourn in the whale—likened his resurrection to an event that never happened; and fourthly, that whereas, according to the prophecy, he was to be in the earth three days and three nights, the Gospels represent him to have been in the grave only one night and a few hours alike of the preceding and of the following day—that is to say, perhaps thirty hours in all. He was buried on Friday evening; his grave was empty at sunrise on Sunday morning, if not,

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

indeed, according to Matthew, at the end of the Sabbath, on Saturday evening. By no possibility, therefore, can his stay in the sepulcher be harmonized with the duration of Jonas' alleged confinement in the whale, since thirty hours or less can not be made to cover a period of three days and three nights.

But the sleeping sentries suiciding for priestly gold to spread the rumor that a grave was vacated, not by a risen God but by a stolen corpse, is but one of the fond fancies of "The Gospel According to St. Matthew." In his exuberant imagination the writer of this pious piece assures us that when Christ was crucified many unusual phenomena occurred. An earthquake rent the veil of the temple in twain; tore rocks asunder, and opened the graves of sleeping saints. Thereupon, these saints "arose," and standing upright or sitting in their tombs politely waited until Christ had risen from the dead, when they left their graves, "and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." The resurrection of these "saints" born from death into life in the shattering rumble of an earthquake, stands on precisely the same authority as the resurrection of Christ. So there was not one resurrection only; there were many.

But who were these resurrected saints so deferential to Christ that they remained in their open graves from Friday evening till Sunday

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

morning? How long had they been dead? Did they come from their tombs in their putrefying flesh? in the bareness of their clattering bones? or merely as unsubstantial ghostly forms? Were they clothed or nude? And who were the “many” to whom they appeared? Did they die again soon? If they came from a world of endless joy, why did they not leave mankind some record of their experience in the realm of the dead? Is it not strange that the history of the time is silent about Matthew’s earthquake; that the Jews never heard of the rending of the sacred temple’s veil; and that the appearance in Jerusalem of a band of resurrected saints—corpses infused with life for exhibition purposes—neither excited the slightest commotion, nor drew from the pen of any writer of the time even the passing notice of a single line? How shall we explain the fact that three of the Gospels and the universal voice of history have absolutely ignored these stupendous miracles? Very simply. They never happened except in Matthew’s perfervid imagination!

Let me say here, that in assuming that the Gospels were written by the men whose names they bear, I do so merely for convenience. As a matter of fact, nobody knows who wrote a line of any of the Gospels. It is certain that they were not written by the disciples of Christ, or by anybody acquainted with Christ or his immediate followers. They are not the Gospels of Matthew,

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

Mark, Luke and John; but Gospels “according” to these persons. These superscriptions did not originally belong to the Gospels; they were added by the church; and whether Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were ever more real than the imaginary characters of fiction, nobody will ever know. Where these Gospels were written, and when, are matters of equal uncertainty. There is no evidence whatever to show that they were in existence during the first century after the supposed events they pretend to describe. Emerging from the darkness of early Christian times, wholly anonymous in their character, composed of myths and legends that had floated for ages in the fancy of ignorance and credulity, selected from a spurious mass of pious drivel, declared divine by superstitious priests and the votes of quarreling religious councils, embellished with frauds by forging hands in the interest of the church—such were and are the Gospels; and the doctrine that they are the inspired word of God is a fond religious fiction that rests on no authority whatever but the lies of priests. But for convenience I assume that they were written by those whose names they bear.

The story of Christ’s resurrection is proved to be hopelessly false by the clamoring tongues of its many contradictions. Was Christ embalmed before he was buried? John tells us that he was. According to John, Joseph of Arimathea

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

and Nicodemus embalmed him with a mixture of "myrrh and aloes of about a hundred pounds weight"—enough to embalm a dozen bodies! According to Matthew he was not embalmed; and Luke's story plainly shows that there was no embalming. Luke says he was wrapped in linen and laid in the sepulcher, and that the women who saw him so laid away, returned to prepare spices and ointments which they brought to the tomb later. But why should the women who, according to Luke, saw the body laid away, prepare spices to embalm it if they knew that it was already embalmed as elaborately as John describes? According to Luke the women prepared the embalming spices before the Sabbath began—before sunset on Friday; according to Mark they did not buy them till after the Sabbath had ended—after sunset on Saturday. Surely no one will ever accuse the Scriptures of monotonous harmony!

How many women came to the sepulcher? John says that one came—Mary Magdalene. Matthew says there were two—Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. Mark holds that there were three—Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome. And Luke insists that there were at least five—"Mary Magdalene and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them." Four inspired writers, yet not one of them can tell us how many women came to the sepulcher of a risen God!

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

At what time did the women come to the tomb? Matthew says they came “in the end of the Sabbath”—at sunset Saturday evening. Mark says they came at sunrise on the first day of the week —on Sunday morning.

When the women came to the tomb they found it empty. The stone had been rolled away. The grave clothes lay where they had been cast. Jesus was no longer in the grave. How long had the sepulcher been empty? Nobody knows. No writer ventures the information that he was present when the resurrection took place; nor does any writer say that anybody else ever said that he or she was present when it happened. The resurrection stands without a single witness. All that the Gospels tell us is that when the women visited the tomb Jesus was not there.

When the women came to the sepulcher, whom did they meet? Matthew says they met “the angel.” Mark says they met “a young man.” Luke is certain that they met “two men.” You are all wrong, declares John; they met “two angels.” Matthew, where was the angel when the women met him? “He was sitting on the stone outside the sepulcher.” Mark, where was the young man? “He was sitting in the sepulcher, on the right side.” What did the women do when they were told that Jesus had risen from the dead? Answer, Matthew. “They departed quickly from the sepulcher with fear and great joy,

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

and did run to bring his disciples word." Mark, is that what they did? "No; it is not." Then tell us, Mark, what they did? "They went out quickly, and fled from the sepulcher, for they trembled and were amazed; neither said they anything to any man, for they were afraid." These are last words of the Gospel of Mark, as it existed in the early centuries. The last twelve verses of that Gospel as we have it, are acknowledged by Christian scholars to be a forgery. They are not found in the oldest manuscripts of the Gospel. Yet I shall make use of these verses, for, though forged, they are a part of the Bible.

Note the last contradiction to which I called your attention. Matthew says the women hurried from the tomb to tell the disciples of the resurrection; Mark says they fled in fear, and for that reason said nothing about it to any man. Both of these statements can not be true.

As we are considering what is called the evidence for the resurrection, let me tell you something about evidence in general. It is a rule in the logic of evidence that the more unusual, the more important, is the fact sought to be established, the greater in amount, the more precise and conclusive in character, must be the evidence required to establish it. An ordinary fact is established by ordinary evidence. An unusual fact, a fact of vast significance, a fact involving life, liberty, reputation, can be established only by a

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

great amount of evidence—evidence of the best quality, evidence that will bear scrutiny and analysis. A modest amount of evidence would be sufficient to prove that a man in good health rose from his bed and dressed himself this morning. Why? Because the fact is one of most common occurrence. But how much evidence do you suppose it would require to convince an intelligent court that a man walked down the street on his ears, and that he walked faster than a healthy athlete who followed him could walk on his well developed legs? Such a proposition could not be proved at all. And why not? Because the thing alleged is unnatural, unreasonable, impossible, and, therefore, false!

A court could more easily believe that a hundred or a thousand witnesses had been deceived by optical illusion, or that they were lying, or that they were insane, than that a man could walk a mile in a few minutes on his ears.

If, moreover, in trying to establish such an unusual proposition, the witnesses did not agree as to the facts; if they contradicted one another in vital essentials as to time, place and circumstances; do you think the court would conclude that the thing had actually happened? Now such a case would be an exact parallel to the story of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The thing affirmed as a fact is unnatural, unreasonable, and, according to every canon of human experience, im-

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

possible. Therefore, no amount of human testimony can make it credible. If all the writers of the New Testament were in absolute agreement about it, that would not even tend to make it true; and when we find the writers who deal with it contradicting one another vitally, the story proves itself to be hopelessly false.

But there are other contradictions. Let us return to them. Where did Mary Magdalene first meet Jesus after his resurrection? John says she met him at the tomb. Matthew says she met him while on her way to tell the disciples. Was she alone when she met him? According to John she was. According to Matthew she was not. Did Mary Magdalene know Jesus when she met him? Matthew tells us that she did, that Jesus saluted her saying, "All hail!" John assures us that she did not know him, that she thought he was "the gardener." Did Mary Magdalene touch Jesus when they met? Yes; according to Matthew, she "came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him." No; according to John, Jesus said to her: "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father." Where did Jesus desire to meet his disciples after the resurrection? Matthew declares he gave Mary Magdalene the following message: "Go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me." Luke avers that the words of Jesus to his disciples were, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusa-

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

lem, until ye be endued with power from on high.” Where, then, did Jesus first meet his disciples after his rise from the dead? Matthew is certain that it was on a mountain in Galilee. Luke insists that it was in Jerusalem; and John adds that it was behind closed doors, where the disciples had met for fear of the Jews. Galilee is at one end of Palestine, and Jerusalem at the other. The two points—one in the North, the other in the South—are separated by what was then known as a three days’ journey. Now as Luke and John declare that Jesus met the disciples on the evening of the day of his resurrection, it is certain he could not have met them in so short a time at a point so far away. If Luke and John are correct, the meeting did not take place in Galilee; if Matthew was well informed, it did not occur in Jerusalem. A little less “inspiration” and a little more truth might have saved the reputation of these writers!

When the disciples saw Christ, were they agreed that it was he? They were not. Matthew tells us that some doubted. Here was a man with whom they had been associated for one year—or for three years—a man with whose person, whose voice, they were entirely familiar, a man whom they revered as their teacher and leader, and yet, when they saw him, they were not satisfied that it was he; they looked on him, talked with him—and doubted!

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

There are Christians who contend that Christ did not rise in his physical body. They believe that he arose in spirit form only. But the Gospels teach that he arose in his body of flesh and blood. According to Luke he said to his disciples: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself, handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." And did he not, according to John, invite doubting Thomas to feel his several wounds? And does not Luke insist that he ate some broiled fish and honey-comb just before his ascension? To argue after all this that the resurrection was spiritual only is to turn the Gospels into a wild burlesque.

There remains the testimony of St. Paul.

Paul tells us that Christ's first appearance was to Cephas, that is, Peter. This is contradicted by all the Gospels. His second appearance, according to Paul, was to the twelve disciples. But there were at that time only eleven disciples—Judas had hanged himself. Of the treachery and suicide of Judas, Paul is utterly ignorant. Paul says that Christ's third appearance was to "above five hundred brethren at once." But not one of these gentlemen has anywhere testified that he saw the resurrected Jesus; and of this appearance to the multitude the Gospels are wholly silent. To certify that Paul is quite mistaken here we may observe that there were not five hundred Christian brethren in the world at that time. "After

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

that," says Paul, "he was seen of James." The Epistle of James knows nothing at all about the resurrection; and no appearance to James is mentioned in the Gospels. "And last of all," declares Paul, "he was seen of me also." It may be so, Paul, but you are the only witness in your behalf. No other writer knows anything whatever about any appearance to you.

The testimony of Paul is in hopeless conflict with the four Gospels. While the Gospels quarrel with one another, Paul quarrels with them all.

While the four Gospels teach that Christ rose from the tomb in his body of flesh and blood, and while two of them declare that with that body he ascended into heaven, Paul challenges the Gospels with this positive pronouncement: "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." Very well, Paul; but if this is so, will you be so good as to explain to us what Christ did with his human body when he got beyond the clouds? After this we can easily agree with the Rev. John W. Chadwick, who says: "Paul's witness to the resurrection is the ruin of the argument."

I call your attention to but one more contradiction. According to Luke, Christ ascended into heaven on the evening of the day on which he rose from the tomb; but according to the Acts of the Apostles he was with his disciples for forty days before his ascension. If there was a memorable period in the life of Christ, it certainly was the

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

period that intervened between his resurrection and his ascension. The incidents of that period must have been indelibly impressed on the minds of the disciples. Never could they have forgotten their associations and conversations with him who had triumphed over death and the grave. His answers to their eager questions as to the world he had visited would have become a part of the very texture of their souls. But in these things the disciples evinced no appreciable concern. They did not question their risen master about the life beyond the tomb. Having brought him from the grave, their only interest in him seems to have been in getting rid of him. They even forgot the time he spent with them in those wonderful days. Luke remembers only from the morning to the evening of the resurrection day; while the writer of Acts extends his stay to forty days. Both accounts may be "inspired," but it is certain that both can not be true.

The ascension of a resurrected God ought to have been considered important enough to merit a fairly complete description. But Matthew does not even mention it. Mark ignored it until the forger referred to it in a meager line. John passes over it in silence. Luke alone of the disciples mentions it, and in his hurry to take leave of the subject dismisses it with this brief reference: "And it came to pass, while he blessed them,

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven."

Luke did not know that the earth revolves on its axis, and that the direction we call "up" is continually changing. He did not know that if Christ went "up" the direction he took would depend precisely upon the time he left, and that twelve hours later he would have gone in the opposite direction. He did not know that the stars are thousands of millions of miles away, and as far apart; that it would take Christ, traveling with the velocity of a cannon ball thousands of ages to reach the nearest of them; that the interstellar spaces are infinitely cold—a thousand times colder than ice; and that the telescope, in sweeping the immensity of space, would never discover the fable land of heaven. Astronomy has no time to consider seriously the story that any being with a human body ascended among the stars.

The evidence by which Christianity seeks to prove that a man or a God rose from the dead is infinitely inadequate. What! Prove the truth of a story that all human experience denies, that the whole universe declares to be false, and prove it with the glaring contradictions offered by ignorance!

There is not a court in the civilized world that would accept such evidence as is offered for the resurrection of Christ as proof against a man of bad reputation that he had killed his neigh-

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

bor's chickens. The evidence is not only worthless; it is self destructive. Yet upon such evidence—evidence that crumbles the moment it is examined—Christianity, with its threat of endless pain, has ever stood and still stands. "If Christ be not raised," says Paul, "your faith is vain." Paul stakes the whole belief in immortality on the resurrection of Christ. How absurd is such a doctrine! How childish is the claim that whether there is or is not a life beyond the grave, depends upon whether a Jewish reformer did or did not rise from the dead!

"But," some may ask, "if Christ did not rise from the dead, how shall we account for the great Easter festival which is celebrated by the Christian world?" Let me explain that the Easter celebration has nothing to do with the resurrection of a God. The celebration of Easter was hoary with age long before Christ was born. It was an old pagan festival in honor of the reanimation, the rejuvenation of nature at the vernal season of the year. On the twenty-first of March the sun, who, as it were, has been buried in the darkness of winter, crosses the line of spring, and, as it appears, ascends triumphantly into the heavens. With the rise of the orb of day, all nature awakens and thrills with newness of life—the grass grows green; the trees shoot out their leaves; the flowers bring forth their buds. It is Nature's resurrection. At this time of the resurrection of the great

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

forces of nature—the forces of life and growth—all the ancient nations celebrated the resurrection of their mythical gods. The Christian church followed the custom of the pagan world; she made her God to rise when the other gods had risen.

Nor is the Easter egg a Christian institution. The egg has ever been regarded as the symbol of life; and at the Easter season, the ancients ate eggs and presented eggs to their friends. The very name of this festival is of pagan origin. Oestra was a Norse goddess, and was worshipped as the devoted patroness of the renewing life of spring. The name of this pagan goddess was borrowed, and became a conjuring word in the vocabulary of Christianity.

There is still another argument. If it were really true that Christ rose from the dead, the world would know the exact date on which the resurrection took place. The date of a fact of such momentous importance—a fact that hurled defiance in the face of Nature, and conquered the forces of the world—could never be forgotten by the mind of man. But the Christian church has never known, nor does she now know, the date of Christ's resurrection. The resurrection is celebrated, not on the anniversary of any particular day, but in accordance with astronomical facts. Easter Sunday is always the first Sunday after the first full moon after the twenty-first of March—the spring equinox. The celebration of

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

the resurrection is therefore a festival of changing time—it may occur as early as the twenty-second of March, or as late as the twenty-fifth of April. Could anything be more curious than this manner of celebrating an historical event? Why should the resurrection of Christ, if an actual occurrence, depend upon the course of the sun and the phases of the moon? Why should it be celebrated in March one year, and in April the next? Simply because the resurrection story is only a pagan fable retold in Christian form.

Nobody knows that Christ ever lived. If he was crucified, nobody knows that he was dead when he was buried. Nobody saw him rise from the tomb. Nobody knows who wrote the resurrection stories; but any thinking person who will examine these stories will discover that they are myths.

Let us face the truth with candor. Christ did not rise from the dead; but the intellect of men is rising to-day from ages of confinement in the grave of superstition. There was no resurrection of Deity on the fabled Easter morn; but humanity is being resurrected to-day from the prisoning hold of a crumbling creed. God did not burst the bonds of the tomb; but man is riving the fetters with which religion has enthralled him, and standing in the light of day, determined to be free. Superstition's gloomy night that palled the world with hate and fear is passed. The sun of

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

reason floods the world with the rosy dawn of a hopeful day. The promise of the future lures the steps of those with eyes to see the light. The priest and the preacher are falling to the rear in the great forward march of mankind. Humanity is rapidly recovering from the Bible's blinding blight. Honest souls no longer tremble at the thought of the bigot's hell. The mirage of heaven that once charmed the human mind and made of earth a desert, is ceasing to sap the energy of the race. Unchained, unafraid, thoughtful, erect, free!—caring for the concerns of this world alone—the men and women who have reached their intellectual maturity—who no longer feel the need of the pious pap of priests—who prefer healthy truth to sickly lies—have come to know that this world, and not another, is our home; that this world can be greatly enriched and improved, that the joys of heaven, plucked from hope, can be realized in this life. So these forward-looking souls are striving to enlarge the realm of freedom in thought and toil; to broaden the sphere of justice; to banish the wolf of want; to bring to all a needful measure of the means of life; to diffuse knowledge; to banish disease and war and crime; to encourage the cultivation of the beautiful; to do the best that can be done to make this world a fit abode for mankind. This is the true resurrection—the resurrection of humanity to a better life.

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

Let me begin this address, in which I hope to show that the Bible is a dangerous moral guide, by eliminating from the Scriptures the notion of divine authority. Although millions believe that the Bible is the word of God, that belief is supported by no evidence whatever. For nobody knows that a God exists; indeed, imagination fails to conceive of an infinite being; and even though it could be demonstrated that there is a God, that fact would not in the remotest manner tend to support the claim that he inspired the Bible. From this it follows that the fact that the Bible has much to say about God is not evidence that it is his word. The fact that some Jews living in Palestine two thousand years ago put their thoughts of God in writing does not make an unthinkable God responsible for what they wrote. Millions of men have talked of God and written of him without any authority but their own. The world has many sacred books and the believers in each of these assert that theirs and theirs alone is the true revelation of the Deity. It is certain that all but one of these holy Bibles

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

must be of human origin; and why except the other? In the nature of things there can be no sound reason for the belief that the stupidities and superstitions, the cruelties and crimes of a collection of ancient Jewish writings are the inspired word of an infinite God.

There is another thing. If the Bible were the most nearly perfect of any book in the world, that fact would not prove its divine origin. If the purity of its moral precepts, the justice of its laws, the accuracy of its historical teachings, the exactness of its science, the grandeur of its philosophy, the beauty of its poetry, entitled it to claim the foremost place among the writings of humanity—a standard of excellence which the Bible utterly fails to attain—the evidence that it is the word of God would still be wanting. The great poems and dramas, the grand orations, the wondrous works of science, philosophy and fiction, are not inspired of God. They are but the noble productions of the human intellect—the creations of genius—the splendid expressions of what man has thought and felt and hoped. If we judge the Bible as we judge other books the phantom of inspiration will vanish from the world.

But why talk about the inspiration of the Bible until we know whether or not that book is true? And if the Scriptures are true what need is there of inspiration? How could inspiration help the truth? If two and two are four without inspira-

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

tion, could any amount of inspiration make their added value five? Is it not obvious that if the Bible is true it is not inspired, since inspiration could not increase the value of truth? On the other hand, if the Bible is not true it can not be inspired, for no amount of inspiration could improve its original falsity. An inspired falsehood would be a falsehood still!

The truth is that the doctrine of inspiration is a pious fiction that was invented by the Jewish and Christian priests for the purpose of winning for their fanciful religious claims an acceptance and a reverence which they never would have commanded without that alleged authority of God.

That the Bible is not inspired, that it is not true, is proved by many facts,—by the falsity of its science, by the foolishness of its philosophy, by the wild exaggerations of its history, and by the immoral character of many of its teachings. I am going to examine some of the moral teachings of the Bible in the light of reason and humanity.

In this world man must have truth. Truth is the priceless jewel of the soul. It is the enduring glory of thought that leads the destinies of the world from the throne of man's inquiring brain. The whole round of human well-being, all correct human relations, rest on truth. Without truth there could be no civilization. To seek the truth is one of the noblest occupations in which man

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

can engage. To proclaim it to the world, however unpopular it may be, is one of the most splendid of virtues. On the contrary, to uphold and spread falsehood is immoral. The Bible upholds falsehood; therefore the Bible is a dangerous moral guide. In Jeremiah, chapter 20, verse 7, Jeremiah complains: "O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived." In chapter 4, verse 10, the prophet again charges God with deception: "Ah, Lord God! surely thou has greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem." The imputation against God is stronger in the ninth verse of the fourteenth chapter of Ezekiel: "And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I, the Lord, have deceived that prophet."

What strange assertions and avowals to find in a so-called inspired book! Think of an infinite God who would stoop to deceive his children! Is there a thoughtful Christian who can really believe that a God of truth inspired these words found in the twenty-second chapter of I. Kings: "And the Lord said, who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? and he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

said, Thou shalt persuade him and prevail also: go forth, and do so. Now therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy phophts, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee!"

Is this the language of inspiration? Is there a God who desires us to believe that he once advertised for a lying spirit, and that he sent the liar to deceive the prophets of a petty king? Surely not!

Nor is the New Testament a spotless champion of veracity. In the third chapter of Romans, Paul offers this astounding justification of falsehood: "For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?" According to Paul, a man is not a sinner if he lies for the glory of God. In this matter the apostle to the Gentiles has the hearty concurrence of many modern preachers. In II. Corinthians, 12, 16, Paul writes: "Being crafty, I caught you with guile"—that is to say deceit, falsehood.

A book that upholds lying in this way, sets the example of falsehood by justifying it, and so makes itself the enemy of truth." Hence, as the Bible condones the use of falsehood in teaching, it is a dangerous moral guide.

The world needs honesty no less than truth. Without honest dealing there can be no real morality. The cheat, the thief, is the despoiler of

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

his fellow-men. Notwithstanding this, the Bible upholds both cheating and stealing. What teaching could be more pernicious than the following advice to the rogue? (Deut. 14, 21): "Ye shall not eat of anything that dieth of itself: thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto an alien." Could anything be more perverse than the permission to sell to the alien—any foreign born, unnaturalized resident—for food, the flesh of an animal that died of itself? Such an animal might have died of disease and its flesh might, therefore, be poisonous. Those who wrote the book of Deuteronomy were aware of this. They felt their stomachs turning over at the thought of eating carrion. Such flesh, however, must not be lost. It must be eaten by somebody—preferably somebody who will buy it. Therefore they enjoined the Jewish people to give this diseased and poisonous flesh to the strangers dwelling among them, or to sell it to aliens. And may we not conlude that it would be asking too much to expect an enterprising Jew to give away what he might sell?

How would you like, Mr. Christian, to have a butcher sell to you for use on your table, the flesh of a creature that died of itself? Your wife has been very ill. The fever, at last, begins to wane. Delirium gives place to rational consciousness. The heart again beats with high hope. The eyes

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

resume their former brightness. The pallid cheek is once more illumined with the divine smile of a good woman's love. Your wife, the mother of your children, is convalescent. The physician in attendance prescribes beef-broth. Now comes a butcher to your door with a large cut of beef from an ox that died of itself—died of disease. For this reason he would not have his family eat it, but being a devout believer in the inspiration of the Bible, he is perfectly willing to obey the sacred word and sell the poisonous flesh to you, in order that your delicate wife may have beef-broth. What would you think, Mr. Christian, of a butcher who would commit such a crime against yourself and the woman you love? Would you not be in favor of teaching him a lesson in common humanity with the full penalty of the law?

To sell for food the flesh of a creature that died of itself is, in all civilized countries, a crime punishable with a fine, or imprisonment, or both. But why punish a man for obeying the injunction of the Bible? Because, in this respect, to practice the precept of the Scriptures is to commit a crime. The Bible is a dangerous moral guide.

I cheerfully admit that the Bible says, "Thou shalt not steal." At the same time it must be acknowledged that that book, without which, so the dear clergy contend, there would be no honesty in the world, is loud in its praise of stealing.

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

In the third chapter of Exodus, this command to steal is put into the mouth of God: “And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty: But every woman shall borrow of her neighbor, and of her that sojourneth in the house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians.” The twelfth chapter says: “And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: And the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. *And they spoiled the Egyptians.*”

To steal under the pretext of borrowing is the meanest kind of thievery. It is theft made worse by cowardice. Moreover, this kind of theft is impossible without the use of falsehood—the promise that the goods will be returned. Yet the Bible upholds this kind of theft by claiming for it the sanction and command of God!

To defend these passages as the clergy sometimes do, by pleading that the Egyptians had oppressed the Israelites, does not help the matter in the least. For it was Pharaoh who had been the task-master over the Jews, and the Egyptians who were robbed were the common people.

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

And even though the Egyptians did owe the Jews something, a real God, if he were honest, would enable his people to collect their dues without resorting to falsehood and theft.

Over and over again in the Old Testament, the Jews are commanded to steal the property of their neighbors. Not only that: these robberies are represented as being committed with the direct assistance of God. And in some instances, as in the case of the Midianites, the story of whose massacre is related in the thirty-first chapter of Numbers, God, as one of the bandits, is allotted a share of the spoil!

In all these recitals of robbery the Bible, by ranging its authority on the side of the thief, shows itself to be a dangerous moral guide.

A fearful record of misery and suffering is the history of human slavery. From the dawn of civilization until modern times this colossal crime trampled the face of man in the dust of degradation. Thousands of years before a line of the Bible was written, every nation in the world had its slaves. In the field, the forest, the mine, the canal, on pyramid and temple, on land and sea, in war and peace, the poor slave wore his life away in the service of his master, conscious that his lot would be the fate of his generations yet unborn.

Slavery outraged the rights of man. It denied the blessing of liberty, the joy of freedom, to

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

many millions of human beings. It denied to man the right to own property, to build himself a home, to take an active interest in the world as the equal of his fellow, to enjoy the drama of life with the fullest appreciation of the free. It invaded the sacred sanctuary of love, robbed man of the right to choose his wife, and forced the women to marry the man her master chose for her. It destroyed family life by separating husbands and wives; and with a hand more ruthless still it tore the child from the frantic mother's breast and sold it at a distance where she might never again look into its eyes. All the natural relations of life were reversed, despised, destroyed by the infamous slave code. The master owned the slave. Body and soul must submit to the dictates of the despot's will. The slave was a creature held for the profit of his master. He was bred and bought and sold, fed and starved and worked and whipped, as his lord and master chose.

It is true that in the Roman Empire, before the introduction of Christianity, the position of the slave had been, for some time, improving. Numerous laws were enacted in his favor. Many slaves were highly educated. Some even were doctors, authors and teachers. Manumissions were common. The great pagan empire was marching towards the light of freedom. Then Christianity came. Darkness settled upon the

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

world. In the course of a thousand years slavery passed into serfdom. Then came the African slave trade among the Christian nations —the most frightful form slavery has ever assumed.

In the United States it was a crime to educate the slave. The world of intellect was not for him. The light of knowledge must not penetrate his brain. The law denied him cultured thought even as it denied him freedom. He was the mud-sill of society and his mind must be buried in darkness beneath the weight of grievous social abuses. The American slave could not testify against his master in the courts. If the master committed murder in the presence of his slaves, they could not be witnesses against him.

Such were slavery's crimes against humanity. Such was the system of spoilation which, beginning in the morning of civilization, flourished with various changes throughout the centuries of history, polluting and destroying the happiness of many millions of the sons and daughters of men.

Before the Bible was written no divine authority could be pleaded in defence of slavery. All the laws and customs that bound the bondman to his chains were born in the minds of men. But now the Scriptures are about to be written. A divine regime—so we should fondly understand—is about to dawn upon the world. A God of jus-

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

tice and love is going to dispel the darkness of earth with the light of heaven—is going to teach equality and brotherhood in an inspired moral code. He has heard the plea of the tortured slave, the awful stroke of the cutting lash, the master's cruel curse. The moan of the mother has reached his ears, and the cries of the little one sold from the breast of love, have touched his heart with pain. The infinite heart at last o'erflows. The divine message comes to earth. We read it with eagerness and care. And what do we find this book to say? Does it sound a clarion call to freedom? Does it bid the chains of slavery break and fall? Does it command the master to stay his lash?—the slave to stand erect and free? Does it proclaim in burning words that all men are entitled to freedom? No! No indeed! To all these questions the Bible gives answers that assassinate our hopes. Its smile is for the oppressor. For freedom it has but a frown. Its greeting to the slave is a chain.

In the twenty-first chapter of Exodus, the Bible, the much belauded charter of liberty, reads the following advice to the slave holder: "If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve; and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he were married, then his wife shall go with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall serve him forever." In this law the buying of human beings is recognized. Slavery is not only recognized but regulated. Nor is it the slavery of negroes with which we are here concerned. It is the slavery of white men and white women—the slavery of Jews. This inspired statute allows the slave to recover his freedom after six years of servitude on one condition only—he must desert his wife and children! He may purchase his freedom solely at the expense of separation from his loved ones. To remain with his wife and babes he must remain in slavery, and not only that: he must submit to the barbaric practice of having his ear bored through with an awl. Thus marked because he prefers his home to liberty, he is to be a slave forever. Yet we are confidently assured that the blessed volume is the friend of freedom, and love, and home.

The Bible allows the master to kill his slave and go unpunished. In the chapter above quoted, we read: "If a man smite his servant or his maid with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

be surely punished. Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished; for he is his money." Only when the slave falls dead beneath the blow shall the master be punished. But let the blow be equally fatal, let the man or the woman linger in agony and die the next day, and the murderous master must not be punished. Why? The reason given is a curious one:—the slave is his master's money! Who but an inspired writer could have framed such an ingenious justification of murder?—the slave may be killed with impunity if the mortal blow is not fatal immediately because he is his master's money!

The New Testament supports the Old in binding the shackles to the limbs of the slave. In Ephesians 6:5, Paul says: "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ." And in Timothy 6: 1, he writes: "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed." The slave is commanded to cringe and cower and worship at his master's feet. He is told to hug his chains, to prize his degradation, to look up to his master and obey him as though he were the very Christ. The master, whether kind or cruel, is worthy of all honor, and must be obeyed lest the doctrine of

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

God be blasphemed! These rules and regulations regarding slavery, these commands to men and women to fall upon their knees in obedience to the despot's will, strike at the root of liberty and encourage the oppressor to oppress. These precepts are the language of cowardice. They would sap self reliance and destroy independence. They swear allegiance to stagnant injustice and denounce the progress of free men as rebellion. These words flatter the tyrant, but to his victim they are a message of despair and death. On the authority of these words Christian masters felt themselves justified in holding slaves. Innumerable theologians argued from them that slavery was a divine institution. The attitude of these pious gentlemen on the question of slavery was scornfully expressed by Whittier, in "Clerical Oppressors:"

"Just God—and these are they  
Who minister at thine altar, God of right!  
Men who their hands with prayer and blessing lay  
On Israel's ark of light!"

What! Preach and kidnap men?  
Give thanks, and rob thy own afflicted poor?  
Talk of thy glorious liberty, and then  
Bolt hard the captive's door?

What! Servants of thy own  
Merciful son, who came to seek and save  
The homeless and the outcast—fettering down  
The tasked and plundered slave!

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

Pilate and Herod friends!  
Chief priests and rulers, as of old, combine!  
Just God and holy! is that church which lends  
Strength to the spoiler, thine?"

When the challenge of the abolitionists provoked the cry that the Bible favors slavery, the answer rang forth clear and true, "So much the worse for the Bible." Slavery was abolished in spite of the Bible, in spite of the church, in spite of all the ministerial defences of the traffic in human flesh and of all the clerical denunciations of the friends of freedom. The Bible was and is the upholder of slavery. Therefore, the Bible is a dangerous moral guide.

Every thoughtful person, not a bigot, knows that religious persecution is an outrage and a crime. If a man has any rights at all, he certainly has the right to follow the light of conscience in religious matters. But the Bible will not admit this. Narrow, bigoted, intolerant, that book prescribes the death penalty for any person who dares to suggest a change of religious belief. Could anything be more cruel than these words from the thirteenth chapter of Deuteronomy? "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods.' . . . Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him, neither

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

shalt thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him. But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. And thou shalt stone him with stones that he die."

Such is the religious liberty of the Bible. If your nearest and dearest relative asks you to join him in the worship of any God but Jehovah, it is your duty to assist in putting him to death. If your son suggests the worship of another God, he must cease to be the object of your tender regard. Your heart of love for him must turn to stone. To shield, to pity, to love him would be rebellion against Jehovah. Your thoughtful son must die. However brave, and kind and true, his life must be destroyed. In obedience to the Bible you must throw the first stone. With the help of your neighbors you must murder your innocent child. Such is the religious liberty of the Bible.

And what shall we say of the awful intolerance that would visit death upon the worshipper of the objects of nature? The seventeenth chapter of Deuteronomy declares: "If there be found among you within any of thy gates . . . man or woman that hath . . . gone and served other gods and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven. . . Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing unto thy gates

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

. . . and thou shalt stone them with stones till they die." Think of regarding as a safe moral guide a book that would deliver a woman to the executioner for worshipping the sun! Millions of the noblest men and women have lived and died as sun worshippers. Sun worship appears to be, indeed, the most natural of all religions. But according to the Bible the sun worshipper has no right to live. That book decrees that whoever falls upon his knees in honor of the orb of day must die a martyr to his faith.

Suppose you were a devout believer in the Bible, and suppose that while walking through a beautiful garden with your wife on a day when all nature was made glad by the wooing warmth and light of the cheering sun, your wife should say to you, with happy enthusiasm and conviction: O What a glorious God is the sun! He wakes from slumber at early morn while darkness sits upon the throne of night. He sends his potent rays abroad and floods the world with wondrous light. He invigorates and cheers all things that live, and beneath his warm and magic touch things rise as from the dead and throb and thrill with life. He clothes the hillside, field and valley with trees and vines and grasses that bear in rich profusion delicious fruits and foods. As with an artist's hand, he paints the gardens and the fields in all the hues and colors of flowers in bloom. While lovers woo upon the banks of

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

pleasant streams, the peaceful waters sparkle beneath his warm bright rays, and while the happy bird upon the branch pours forth his soul in joyous song, the placid lake reflects the image of the source of light. From the ocean's waves the sun draws vapor to the clouds; in clouds the vapor drifts about and later falls to earth in rain; and now appears the sun again, whose smile upon the water drops still lingering in the air, illuminates the sky with the enchanting rainbow. If the sun should vanish from the sky, all life would disappear from earth. We are the children of the sun. All life and love, all joy and hope, come from the source of light. I love the sun! To me he is the greatest of the Gods. Every day I fall upon my knees and worship him as the divine father and universal king.

Suppose your wife should thus solemnly confess herself to you a worshipper of the sun. As a believer in the Bible you can no longer shield and love her. You must disown her as your wife. All the years of her devotion to your joy you must forget. Her plea for sympathy you must ignore. She has worshipped the sun. That is enough. The Bible cries for vengeance; its intolerant God must be obeyed; you must help to kill your loving wife, whose last word breathes forgiveness on your cruel act. Such is the religious liberty of the Bible. That book enslaves not only the body, it enslaves also the mind. It

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

makes death the penalty for religious progress.

But some may say that the New Testament is in favor of religious liberty. The truth is that the New Testament is as intolerant as the Old. In Galatians, 1: 9, Paul declares: "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." In the fifth chapter of the same Epistle the cursing apostle approves of death to the foes of his faith: "I would they were even cut off which trouble you." According to Luke 19: 27, Jesus gave utterance to this frightful command: "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." And the most terrible lines in all literature—lines that have surpassed all others in causing human suffering—are found in the last chapter of the Gospel of Mark: "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

By the word "damned" the church has always understood eternal torment in the fires of another world. Christianity has ever been, and is, a religion of belief. According to that religion, he who holds the right belief will enjoy eternal happiness in heaven, but he who doubts or denies the Christian creed will endure the agonies of hell through all the future's never ending years. For many centuries, this bigoted and heartless faith deformed and brutalized the intellect of the

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

world. The church was eager to save the souls of men. There was no salvation except by Christian faith. The duty of the church was clear: she must force all men to believe. It was a work of mercy, as she thought, to torture the body here to save the soul hereafter. What were a few moments of pain inflicted on an unbeliever here, thought she, if by that suffering he could be induced to change his mind, to become converted, and to escape the agonies of hell through the gracious forgiveness of Christ. The church knew that in the New Testament, as in the Old, the believer is commanded to persecute in the name of the faith. The devout Christian was he who willingly obeyed the voice of his inspired book. Accordingly, when the church rose to power in the Roman Empire she entered upon the terrible task of forcing her cruel creed upon the world. Openly, boldly, without remorse, she hunted down those whom she regarded as her foes. After many centuries stained with blood and wet with tears, the church divided on points of doctrine; but the Reformers had no quarrel with Rome on the ground of persecution. They were persecutors too. In the creeds of the early Protestant churches persecution for opinion's sake was a distinct and definite doctrine of faith and practice. Under the Lutherans and the Calvinists, under the Church of England as under the Church of Rome, the awful work of cruelty continued, until the

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

progress of knowledge, the advancement of science, and the growing power of scepticism wrenched the red hand of superstition from the throat of an outraged world!

No power of imagination can conceive of the pain that has been inflicted on innocent men and women because the Bible is a persecuting book and because therefore Christianity has ever been a persecuting faith. Some were locked in dungeons dark and deep and left to slowly die of hunger and of thirst. Some were sewn in bags and thrown to the hungry waves. Some were tied to stakes on the seashore to be drowned by the slowly rising tide. Some were stretched on racks of torture until their joints were torn apart. Some were flayed and buried alive. Some had their eyes extinguished, their ears and arms cut off, their tongues removed with pincers, their legs crushed and broken in iron boots. Some were strangled. Myriads were hanged. Enough to populate a world were burned alive; and no historian can compute how many millions fell on fanatic fields in fierce religious wars.

For ages the church exhausted her ingenuity in devising ways and means of torture! The noblest and the best fell victims to her mad and solemn zeal. The scientist and the philosopher, the scholar and the statesman, the judge, the priest, the preacher, old men and women with wrinkled brows and whitened hair, brave youths

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

and loving maidens, even children of tender years—all those who doubted or departed from the faith were done to death by the Christian Church. The Bible was her text-book. Purity of faith here and salvation hereafter was her aim. And thus through all the centuries of her power she destroyed the life and happiness of man on the authority of her claims that the Bible is divine. It is the verdict of history that the Christian Church has caused more unmerited suffering, and shed more innocent blood than any other institution the world has known. Back of all this agony—back of all the martyred millions, the ruined homes, the blasted reputations, the deserted friends—back of all the cruel carnage of religious persecution—stands the authority of the Bible! Following the Bible has led to the martyrdom of humanity. Therefore, the Bible is a dangerous moral guide.

What could be more revolting, more completely suffused with horror, than cannibalism? Yet the Bible upholds the eating of human flesh—the flesh, not of strangers, but of your own loved ones. In the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy may be read these infamous words: “And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee. . . The man that is tender among you,” shall eat “the flesh of his children. . . The tender and delicate woman

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

among you . . . her eye shall be evil toward . . . her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them.” Behold the awful spectacle. Tender fathers and delicate mothers eating the flesh of their dimpled babes! The Bible is in earnest when it tells parents that they shall eat the flesh of their children. How fiendish are these words from the ninth verse of the nineteenth chapter of Jeremiah: “And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons, and the flesh of their daughters, and they shall eat every one the flesh of his friend.” Christians tell us that the men who wrote these frightful passages were inspired. But can we be certain that they were not insane? At any rate it must be acknowledged that a book containing such monstrous teachings is a dangerous moral guide.

Since the Bible upholds so many other crimes, we need not be surprised to find that it advocates murder. In the thirty-second chapter of Exodus occurs this command: “Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.” The order was obeyed, and, according to the story, three thousand men were killed. For what? Because some ignorant wretches had worshipped a golden calf!

Listen to this perfectly fiendish command,

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

from the fifteenth chapter of I. Samuel: "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." How humane! Fancy the nobility of a soldier who would butcher women and babes! Think of a God issuing an order to have infants and sucklings carved with the sword! Even the cattle must be wantonly destroyed.

Among his many curses, Jeremiah wrote this in chapter forty-eight, verse ten: "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood." What a saintly character Jeremiah was!

Here is a gem from the pen of the raving Ezekiel, who ate Old Testament manuscripts at the command of God: "Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children and women." (Ezekiel 9:6). Only a madman or a fiend could have uttered such inhuman words.

According to the thirty-first chapter of Numbers it was by command of God that a Jewish army made war on the Midianites. All the men of the nation were slain in battle while engaged in defending their lives and their homes. The women and children were taken captive; and when their property had been stolen, their castles and their cities burned, and their country left in desolation, they were brought to the camp where Moses stood. On seeing these unfortunate women, the

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

meek one flew into a passion of rage. "Have ye saved all the women alive?" he angrily exclaimed. Then this man of God gave his soldiers these infamous instructions: "Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman. . . . But all the women children . . . keep alive for yourselves." Never fell more heartless words from human lips.

In imagination I can see those woeful mothers, their eyes streaming with tears, their hearts heavy with pain, lovingly holding their baby boys in their trembling arms and pleading that their lives may be spared. Their husbands have been slain, but they want to live for their little ones. "If you will kill us," they cry, "do spare our babes!" But their plaintive wails find no lodgement in the barbarian soldiers' breasts. Their hearts are pierced with cruel spears; the air is rent with unheeded screams; and in a little while all the mothers and baby boys of a nation lie where they were massacred in a foreign land.

But a worse fate awaited the maidens who had seen their mothers fall. These, thirty-two thousand in number, were distributed amongst the soldiers who had murdered their people, and the barbarians who had remained at home. Thus was the servitude of loathsome lust forced on these girls by the assassins of their loved ones. And this measureless infamy is said to have been committed by command of God!

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

The Lord promised Joshua that he would be with him. With this encouragement Joshua set about to conquer the promised land. Blood flowed in rivers. The helpless fell before the sword like withered leaves before a driving gale; and when all that had lived were dead, the following account of the campaign of extermination was written in the fortieth verse of the tenth chapter of the book of Joshua: "So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings: he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel commanded."

Read the awful book of Joshua. In it you will see an army, as ignorant and as brutal as ever drew the sword of war, advancing from city unto city where people dwell in peace enjoying liberty and love. You will see men and women of every age and rank falling before the strokes of death. Now the prattling babe smiles on the uplifted sword, and now he feels it running through his baby heart. All around you are the dying and the dead, and all that breathe must die. You hear the cries of anguish as you walk in human blood, and raising your eyes, you see beyond the fires of a burning town. Yet the Bible assures us that this wholesale extermination of nation after nation was in obedience to instructions given by God!

The world regards the Kaiser, and justly, as

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

infamous. History will brand him as one of the cold blooded, calculating monsters of the human race. But the Kaiser has been an assiduous student of the Bible. He has quoted it more frequently than all the monarchs of his time put together. He is thoroughly familiar with its gospel of force, its glorification of war. The name of its War God has ever been on his lips. In no other book could he have found such warrant for the crimes of his frightfulness. And who shall say that when he hurled his gray hordes at the throats of Belgium and France, he was not thinking, for example, of this precedent found in the second chapter of Deuteronomy: "Rise ye up, take your journey, and pass over the river Arnon: behold I have given into thine hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land; begin to possess it, and contend with him in battle."

But the Kaiser did not follow his biblical precedent to the letter, for the thirty-fourth verse of the chapter quoted says: "And we took all his cities at that time, and utterly destroyed the men, and the women, and the little ones, of every city, we left none to remain." The Kaiser, however much he may have been influenced by the Bible, though he killed as many men as he could, gave up the task of exterminating the women and children. In this respect the modern war-lord showed himself morally superior to his ancient model—Jehovah.

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

As a deeply religious man, with "God for ever on his tongue," and the Bible at his pillow, the Kaiser has illustrated to the world the awful influence of that so-called inspired book's warlike recitals when doted on by a crowned assassin dreaming of conquest. For, that Wilhelm II. was influenced by the Bible is beyond question; and his hireling clergy who defended his crime and promised him victory appealed to the same book.

The Bible says, "Thou shalt not kill," and then proceeds to recite a long and gruesome catalogue of murders, massacres and wars of conquest, for which it claims the approval or command of God. Hence the Bible is a dangerous moral guide.

The thirteenth chapter of Romans enjoins: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." These words justify the basest political tyranny. According to these words, resistance to despots is rebellion against Deity. The Bible would have us believe that the lovers of freedom who dethrone tyrants and establish republics are criminals in the sight of God!

Lying, cheating, stealing, slavery, religious prosecution, cannibalism, murder, war and ty-

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

ranny are but some of the crimes that the Bible sanctions and defends. In Abraham's preparation to sacrifice Isaac, in Jephthah's sacrifice of his daughter, in David's hanging of the seven sons of Saul, and in the law of the twenty-seventh chapter of Leviticus, the Bible ranges itself on the side of human sacrifices. In the lives of the patriarchs, of Gideon, of Saul, of David, of Solomon, and in the statute in the twenty-first chapter of Deuteronomy, pertaining to the rights of the children of the hated wife, there is sanction of and legislation for polygamy. In the twenty-second chapter of Exodus is found the injunction: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," a line winged with the ignorant spirit of murder, that lit the fires during the Christian centuries under hundreds of thousands of innocent women charged with the impossible crime of witchcraft. In allowing a man to banish his wife at will, according to the twenty-first chapter of Deuteronomy, or to subject her to the barbaric test of jealousy, prescribed in the fifth chapter of Numbers, the Bible gives instances of its cruel subjection and degradation of women. As it upholds human sacrifices, polygamy, the witchcraft superstition and the brutal treatment of women, the Bible is a dangerous moral guide.

Where the moral teachings of the Bible are not pernicious, they are often worthless, as for example, the advice to take no thought for the

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

morrow, to turn the other cheek to the smiter, to lend your goods to any borrower, to go two miles with the man who would compel you to go one, to sell all you have and give the proceeds to the poor, and other such counsels of perfection, which, if followed, would wreck and strand civilization.

In the face of all this we are told that the Bible is inspired and holy, and the foundation of our civilization. What pious stupidity! Why is the world so backward to-day with all its boasted progress? Why have mankind not yet learned to live in peace and brotherhood? Because for two thousand years the intellect of the world has been poisoned with the teachings of a book that glorifies nearly every crime against humanity; because the church, instead of striving to develop the moral and intellectual resources of mankind, has enthralled the minds of men and women with the worship of the barbaric records of an uncivilized, tribal people. Says Professor Henry Sturt, of Oxford University, in "The Idea Of A Free Church": "Of all the terrible intellectual disasters of Europe the Bible has been by far the greatest."

The truth is that the Bible is a dangerous moral guide, a guide which, if followed, would land men in the alms house or the penitentiary. All the language of exaggeration has been exhausted in praising that book, and yet that book has been the greatest enemy of the human race.

## THE BIBLE A DANGEROUS MORAL GUIDE

It has been the enemy of liberty, the enemy of knowledge, the enemy of morality. That book helped largely to destroy the civilization of Greece and Rome. It gave Europe the long night of the dark ages. It made ignorance and cruelty universal. It enslaved millions. It drenched Christian lands with the blood of persecution. It caused countless religious wars. It filled millions of lives with sorrow, and covered countless faces with tears. For the civilization we enjoy we are indebted to the brave thinkers who fought against the ignorance and the abuses that are championed by the Bible. The world has advanced in spite of the repressive influence of its "inspired" book. Every educated minister knows this. The best minds in the church today take consolation from the fact that the Bible is not true. The light is spreading everywhere. The clergy are apologizing. Superstition is surely fading from the mind. Freethought holds the allegiance of the world's best brains. The day is coming when mankind will own that while there are many good things in the Bible, its influence in the world proves it to have been an extremely dangerous moral guide.

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH ?

Since the birth of religion in the primeval world the human mind has asked the question: Is there a life after death? Are the few brief years that span our course from the cradle to the tomb the full measure of life allowed us? or is the passage through the veil of death the entrance upon a life that will be immortal? The ages have come and gone; innumerable generations have been laid to rest in the welcoming dust; and still mankind repeat the words of Job: "If a man die shall he live again?" Religion has sought with painted promises to answer this question but its answers have not sufficed. Philosophy has uttered feeble words of hope but these have evoked no echo from the tomb. Through all the dying years the grave has been as silent as the sphinx. Man knows no more about another life to-day than the first savage mother knew when she pressed her trembling lips to the cold cheeks of her lifeless babe and marveled at the mystery of death—no more than the Egyptian slave knew when he wondered

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

whether he would meet in another world the loved ones he had lost in this. A hundred centuries have like rivers flowed and lost their lapse in time's eternal sea, while sincere souls have searched for some stray gleam of assurance that life, at the summons of death, continues in another sphere; but the tired eyes of saints and sages have peered into darkness; the wings of hope have fanned a voiceless air; the veil hung in the back-ground of the grave has not been lifted; no sign has come from the realm of the dead to tell us that beyond the sable border of this life we shall enjoy another.

If there is another life, why has man throughout the ages yearned in vain to know of it? What known truth has so eluded the human mind? Can it be that while search in all other matters is rewarded with knowledge, some freak of fate defies us to discover the secret that we shall live again? Should we not perhaps take the hint that the fact that all the thought and effort of the ages to learn of another life has brought us no knowledge whatever of it is a strong presumption that the idea of a life beyond the grave is but an idle dream?

Certain it is that while the hope of another life has welled within the heart, a tremendous doubt as to its reality has ever lingered in the thoughtful mind. Growing with increasing knowledge, that doubt has come to be a potent factor

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

in modern cultured thought. Since no glint of light has ever pierced the shroud of death, since nothing gives assurance that life survives the tomb, millions—among them the wisest and noblest of mankind—feel that death is what it appears to be, that Nature is not deceiving us—that life stops at the grave. No thoughtful mind can long be satisfied with the belief that some wise design is withholding from us the fact that we are to live again. Nothing that we know or can imagine of Nature could justify belief in such a curious caprice. Reason, in the end, will force us to conclude either that the facts of life when understood indicate with some degree of clearness that we shall live again, or that those facts make it extremely probable—probable to the point of justifying conviction—that the belief in another life is a fond delusion.

The question of immortality can not be settled for mankind in the partisan and prejudiced court of any church or creed. It must be settled in a court whose only interest is truth. Whether there is or is not another life must be determined—if determined at all—by science.

Science deals, not with fancies, but with facts. It does not create or change truth; it merely ascertains the truth that is. It strives to know actualities—the things that really are—and the conditions that must follow from existing facts.

Science interprets nature in terms of causes

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

and effects. It knows of no effect without a cause—of no cause without an effect. It can not conceive, nor can it admit any break in this chain of sequences. An effect without an efficient cause would be a miracle; and to admit miracle is to deny law. The universe is governed by law.

Science deals with matter and force. It knows nothing of spirit. All the functions and activities of matter it understands as manifestations of force. The whole universe, so far as science apprehends it, is composed of these two factors—matter and force. The gleaming stars above our heads, the fertile earth beneath our feet, the mighty ocean's rolling waves, the multi-colored glory of the rainbow, all forms of living things from the tender violet's bloom to the massive oak that defies the storm, from the lark that thrills the air with song to the smiling mother whose touch is love—all things that exist so far as science can conceive are combinations of these creative factors—matter and force. A stone is matter: the cohesive power that holds its molecules together is force. The muscle is matter: its contraction is an employment of force. The stomach is a material arrangement: the process of digestion is performed by force. The brain is a delicate combination of matter: its function, thought, is a form of force.

Now matter and force can not exist apart. There can be no force unconnected with matter

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

—no matter not associated with force. The existence of one necessitates the presence of the other. That one should exist alone is unthinkable.

All knowledge is accumulated by proceeding with inquiry from the known to the unknown. Accordingly, before we consider a future life, we must learn the nature of the present life, for if we are to live again that life must be in some way a continuation of the life we now enjoy.

It is scarcely necessary to say that science utterly denies the possibility of the resurrection of the body.

This organism we call our body, this material structure in which, with which, and by which we live, is but a transitory arrangement of substances, and will pass away. Our bodies are composed of precisely the same elements as enter into the composition of the earth, the water and the air. Each of us is but a shapely combination of innumerable millions of tiny cells of nitrogen, oxygen, hydrogen, carbon, phosphorus, iron, potassium, sulphur and other elements. About seventy per cent. of our weight is water. These cells of which we are composed are continually being destroyed and replaced by new ones. An army of new cells is, as it were, ever marching in the circulation of our blood to take the places of the cells that, like soldiers, have fallen in the battle of life, and to rebuild the tissues of our bodies

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

to serve as fortifications to keep out the ever threatening invader—death.

In this continuous process of disintegration and renewal our bodies are, so to speak, dying and being reborn every moment of our lives.

In old age our tissues become less and less able to absorb and assimilate the renewing cells from our circulation, and when a certain stage of such incapacity has been reached, death ensues.

Made as we are of the common elements of earth, wasting away and being rebuilt in every part with every breath we draw, uniting our bodies at last with the dust whence they came, nothing can be plainer than that our physical beings when returned to mother Nature will dissolve and mingle their elements with the earth and air forever. Yet more; the particles that now make up our fragile frames will, after we have vanished from the stage of time, reappear again and again in the manifold processes of nature. They will appear in vegetation, blossoming in the rose and swaying in the stately pine; they will flow in the currents of rivers, nestle on the bosoms of flowers in glistening dew, and be wafted in sun-kissed breezes over continents and seas; they will reappear in countless animal forms, and with the march of the ages they will serve to build up the tissues of succeeding generations of men.

In nature nothing is lost. The same materials

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

are used over and over again. The iron that circulates in the blood of a simpleton to-day, may in the next generation nerve the arm of a hero, or enrich the thought of a philosopher.

Since nature makes the tree, the beast and the man of the same materials, never wasting an atom, but always using the old in the new, nothing is more certain than that we carry in our bodies the elements that have entered into the composition of many forests, of innumerable animals, and of countless generations of men. No man lives by himself alone even in the possession of his body. We have, in a sense, the bodies of our ancestors, and the flesh we now know as ours will clothe the bones of generations yet unborn. For these reasons science assures us that those who, like the pious readers of the Church of England's "Book of Common Prayer," declare their belief in "the resurrection of the body," hug to their breasts an absurd superstition.

The facts of nature render the resurrection of the body inconceivable and impossible.

But if the elements of the body are to mingle with the dust, float in the air, gurgle in streams, and enter into the composition of successive animal and plant forms, what part of us is it that is destined to live again? Seeing that the body must be left behind, that Nature dooms it to destruction, millions of believers in another life content themselves with the thought that the

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

mind or soul will, without the body, continue its existence in another sphere. But is such an existence possible? Can the mind survive the death of the agent that produced it? In answer to this question the facts appear to be as conclusive as in the case of the resurrection of the body. Nothing is known of the mind except in connection with the brain. The study of the mind is in every case the study of the brain in action. The whole science of physiological psychology demonstrates that mind is neither more nor less than a brain function. Says Professor William Kingdon Clifford, in his "Lectures and Essays:" "The laws connecting consciousness with changes in the brain are very definite and precise, and their necessary consequences are not to be evaded." "Surely," says Professor Huxley, in his essay on "Hume," "no one who is cognizant of the facts of the case, nowadays, doubts that the roots of psychology lie in the physiology of the nervous system. What we call the operations of the mind are functions of the brain, and the materials of consciousness are products of cerebral activity." "Mind," writes Dr. Maudsley, in "Responsibility in Mental Disease," "may be defined physiologically as a general term denoting the sum-total of those functions of the brain which are known as thought, feeling, and will. By disorder of the mind is meant disorder of those functions." Professor Romanes, in his

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

book on "Monism," holds that mind is "nothing but matter in motion."

The dependence of the mind upon the brain is so certain, so perfect, so unvarying, as to make thought apart from brain rationally unthinkable. The quantity and quality of thought depend upon the quantity and quality of the brain, upon the development of its various parts, upon the number and depth of its convolutions. Man is the most intelligent of all creatures because of all living things he has the most highly developed brain substance.

With the exception of the elephant and the whale, man surpasses the whole animal world in the absolute weight of his brain, while relatively man's brain is larger than that of any other creature. A certain quantity of brain is essential to the possession of normal intelligence. The average human brain weights forty-nine and one-half ounces. The brains of idiots as a rule, weigh from sixteen to thirty-two ounces; but the brain of an idiotic woman, forty-two years of age, weighed only a fraction over ten ounces. On the other hand, men of exceptional intellectual power are, for the most part, men of exceptionally large brains. While the average brain weighs slightly over three pounds, the brain of Cuvier, the illustrious French naturalist, weighed nearly four, and Gladstone's brain is said to have weighed five pounds and three ounces. Among

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

the largest brains of the world were those of Cromwell, Byron, Schiller and Napoleon—all men of vast potency of thought. That men with small brains have been great, has been due to the peculiar development of the brain substance, to its superior quality, or to unusual application. But while greatness in some direction may be the child of a small brain, comprehensive greatness is nowhere found except in connection with a large brain well favored in its form.

Whole races are superior to other races by reason of brain development. The superiority of the Caucasian race over the negroid races lies in the larger and nobler conformation of the white man's cerebral lobes.

The force of the intellect and the richness of the emotions depend upon the number and depth of the convolutions of the brain—its wrinkles and folds—no less than upon its actual size. In the lower orders of life—fishes, amphibians and birds—the brain-surface is almost smooth, and intelligence is correspondingly low. In the higher animals, like the dog, the elephant and the ape, the brain is well supplied with convolutions, and, accordingly, the intelligence is vastly higher. In the brain of the new-born babe the convolutions are but beginning to form, and as they grow with the growth of the brain the mind as gradually grows from its first faint light to its full-orbed effulgence.

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

The size of the brain is increased by intense mental activity. Anatomists experienced in dissecting human brains concur in the observation that the brains of serious students—philosophers, poets, scientists, statesmen, and scholars and thinkers generally—are firmer in their consistency, more symmetrical in their development, and more generously supplied with deep convolutions than the brains of common workmen. The convolutions in the brain of Beethoven were found to be “twice as deep and numerous as usual.”

Another proof that the brain is the organ of thought—that mind is a function of the brain—is found in the facts of physiology. As the great central office of the nervous system, with its cables of communication running to every part of the body, the brain receives through the sensory nerves a constant flow of impressions from the outer world, and flashes messages back over the motor wires with lightning speed. Hence the mind changes with the different impressions the brain receives, and at any given moment the whole body will reflect the state of mind that has arisen through the action of the brain.

Man is not a duality—mentally and physically he is one. Under the stimulus of good news his eyes sparkle, his whole being thrills with joy; in fear he turns pale; in shame he blushes; in anger the enlivened blood suffuses his cheeks with its red glow. The sight of one in pain, or even

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

an unpleasant thought, will make him swoon. Swayed by a violent emotion, he will vomit. Sudden grief will whiten his hair. If the blood courses too swiftly through his brain, his thought will gallop in confusion: if too slowly, he will become unconscious. A little alcohol will banish his reason, loosen his tongue, suspend his sense of shame and arouse his passions. Loss of sleep will dull his thought. Too much thought will waste his flesh. The expectation of some delicious morsel will cause a rapid secretion of saliva in his mouth. If he eats too much he will dream when he is asleep. If he eats too little he will have visions when he is awake. When the body is fatigued the mind flags, but when the body and the brain have been refreshed with sleep, the mind returns with buoyant clearness to its tasks. So it is that our physical condition depends largely upon the mind, while the mind in turn reflects the physical condition.

Not only is thought created by molecular movements in the brain, but the different faculties are born within and confined to different parts of the brain. The brain, like the body, has its division of labor. Experimental study of the brains of lower animals, and observations on brain lesions in the human subject, have proved that each department of mind is presided over by its own area of brain substance. Thus with one portion of the brain we see, with another we hear, with another

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

we taste, with another we are conscious of touch, while the office of another is to preside over the sense of smell. When we move the eyes or the lips, the arms or the legs, we do so with the permission of the motor areas of the brain that control these parts of our bodies. Breathing, sneezing, coughing, the secretion of saliva, and swallowing, are controlled by their respective brain centres. The intellectual and perceptive faculties are located in the cerebrum—the frontal lobes. The emotions are born in the parietal lobes. Each part of the brain attends to its particular function, and the sum total of these functions is what we call the mind, or the soul.

Moreover, anatomy proves that this mind or soul can be destroyed piece by piece by destroying the brain section by section. Flourens, the French physiologist, saw the faculties of animals on which he experimented, fade away one by one as he removed successive portions of their brains. He carried this process of mind destruction so far in fowls, that the creatures, with the thinking portions of their brains entirely removed, and their minds completely gone, still lived, though in a perfectly stupid condition. Utterly unconscious, as void of mind as stones, unresponsive to stimulus of any kind, these creatures, kept alive by artifical feeding, nevertheless lived for months—some of them for years—and not only lived, but increased in weight. Similar experi-

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

ments have been performed on some of the higher animals, and in every instance a portion of the mind has died with the destruction of the portion of the brain to which that faculty belonged. Now the human mind, like the animal mind, can be destroyed piecemeal. A man becomes blind if the sight centre of his brain is injured by hemorrhage. He becomes deaf if the hearing centre is destroyed. Similar lesions will banish his other senses. Lesion of the speech centre destroys the power to express one's self in words. In the deaf and dumb, an injury to this part of the brain is followed by the loss of power to express ideas in the sign language. Paralysis of the brain annihilates intelligence.

What stronger proof could be required that the mind is mortal, that it dies with the brain, than to see it disappear, one faculty after another, before the advance of the surgeon's knife, or ruinous injury, or disease, until the last vestige of intelligence vanishes forever from the ruined brain?

But drowning men, as a proverb has it, will grasp at straws. So it is not surprising that some philosophers, loath to give up a cherished doctrine, should advocate strange and irrational theories with endeavor to at least make it appear possible that the soul will continue to live after the body has returned its elements to the dust. One of these men was the late William James,

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

the eminent Professor of psychology at Harvard University. Professor James' theory was not new, and perhaps he advanced it as a piece of pure speculation rather than as a rooted conviction. As a scientific thinker, Professor James well knew that the mind is a function of the brain, and he fully acknowledged the fact as a sound demonstration of science. But having granted this, he went on to suppose, in his lecture on "Human Immortality," that perhaps the mind does not originate in the brain, that perhaps it comes to us from some unseen world, that having entered a man's head it uses his brain as its organ of expression while here, and that on the death of the brain, it wings its flight to its original home.

This idea of the external origin of mind, of mind as a distinct principle, is the last surviving relic of the Greek notion of indwelling entities which found its leading exponent in Plato. According to Plato, organic and inorganic things derive their peculiar character from their respective entities: a man thinks, a dog obeys his master, a tree grows, a statue has form, because each is possessed of an immaterial idea—a soul. For many centuries, this notion of entities in all things was popular in Christian teaching. But the advent of science has so far banished the superstition from the world that to-day all things but the human mind are acknowledged to act in

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

accordance with their own inherent forces. The human mind alone is still believed by some to be an immaterial entity—an independent thing—a visiting principle from some other world domiciled within the brain.

This is to suppose that there is somewhere in the universe a great reservoir of mind, and that at the birth of every babe a portion of this mind comes to earth and enters the baby's head. But how could this realm of mind, which must be a form of force, exist apart from matter? Such an existence is inconceivable.

Again, if only sufficient mind for a babe enters the child's head, how does it happen that as the child grows his mind develops, so that when he becomes a man he is possessed of a man's mind? Does enough mind to do for a man come down when the child is born? and does it enter the growing child's head a little at a time while the rest waits outside? Or does the great reservoir of mentality, from its lofty height, pour a steady stream of mind into the child's head, slowly at first, and then faster, during all the years of mental growth from babyhood to manhood?

There is another objection to this curious and fantastic supposition. If mind is not born within the brain, but comes to the brain full-fledged from another world, and merely uses the brain as a vehicle of expression while here, how shall we explain the many different qualities of mind?

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

and how shall we account for the changes that take place in minds during their residence in the brains of men? Is the savage given a savage mind? Is the idiot given an idiotic mind? Does the African get the Negro mind merely because he is black? Is the genius given a mind whose majesty glories in the wealth of its creative powers? Is one man given a mind that overflows with love and goodness? another a mind that revels in cruelty? another a mind that continues normal for many years and then becomes insane?

Is there somewhere a sea of mind from which superstition, degeneracy, imbecility, criminality, genius and normal intelligence emanate? and does the fact that a man is superstitious, or a degenerate, or an imbecile, or a criminal, or a genius, or normal in his thoughts and deeds, depend upon the kind of mind that has come from that mental ocean to sojourn in his brain?

If the mind is not created by the brain, why does its quantity and quality depend upon the quantity and quality of the brain? Why is normal intelligence never found in brains below a certain weight? Why does injury to the brain destroy forever the associated mental faculties? or make a thief of one who formerly was honest? or a cruel man of one who erstwhile was kind? Why does disease of the brain disintegrate intelligence and make the mind insane?

If the mind is not a function of the brain, why

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

should it be in all respects subject to the vicissitudes of the body? Why should it grow old and feeble with the age and decay of its imprisoning brain? Do we not see that in old age the sight fails, the hearing becomes dull, memory fumbles and forgets, ideas limp in half-completed form, while the whole intellectual fire that flamed full and high in life's long-gone prime burns low with lapsing vigor in growing nearness to the feeble embers of the worn-out brain? Before the end of life, in such instances, the mind gradually dies, and when death comes it closes the career of a mere remnant of mentality.

And if the mind, the soul, comes to the brain from some other sphere, is it not strange that it should remember nothing of its origin, that it should be without conception of its previous existence, and that it should grope and guess in doubt and darkness as to its future?

Those who believe that consciousness is not a property of the brain, argue that the mind and the brain sustain the same relation to one another than the musician sustains to his instrument. But the mind and the brain keep pace in growth. Does the violin grow with the violinist? The mind sleeps with the tired brain. Does the violin tire and sleep with the player? In sleep the mind dreams. Does the violin play discordant tunes when the performer is unconscious? The player may be in New York, when his

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

violin is in San Francisco. Can the mind thus completely separate itself from the brain? With disease of the brain the mind becomes insane. Does the violinist lose his reason when his instrument breaks a string? And can the artist retain his musical ability forever after the instrument has been destroyed? Does not the existence of the violinist as such necessitate the existence of the violin? Surely this analogy, pretty though it be, fails to account for consciousness, or to shed any light on its continuance in the absence of the brain.

Is it reasonable to suppose that while every other organ of the body is alive with its own motion, and performs its inherent function, the brain, the most marvelously complex organ of all, would be a dead mass in the cavern of the skull unless played upon by some extraneous intelligence? The infinite absurdity of such a supposition is clearly portrayed in the story of man's origin.

Man is a child of evolution. His body and his brain have been built up through the gradual accumulation of countless improvements during millions of ages. Psychical and physical evolution have moved in unison, and man owes his soul no less than his body to the innumerable animal forms at every stage of life's advance through which his ancestors arose. Standing at the head of the long procession of life, related

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

to the animals below him in every bone and sinew of his being, his thought differs from the thought of other creatures in degree only, not in kind. Man's soul, the sum total of his faculties, emerged with him from the animal world, and is as natural in all respects as his physical frame. Now let those who say that this soul is a divine spark that will live forever essay to answer the question: At what period in the evolutionary process was this soul implanted in our ancestors? Was it born in the primal substance in which life first arose? Was it implanted when life's highest form was a worm, a fish, an amphibian? Was it conferred upon the first mammal? or upon the highest ape? Was it pressed into the fierce, low skull of primitive man? Or has man been blessed with this gift of immortality at some late stage in his advance towards civilization?

In the old days when it was believed that man was a special creation, that a creating God, in the role of a potter, having molded his form in clay, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, it was easily believed that his soul was destined to enjoy immortality. But knowing as we do to-day that the life on this planet is one, that the highest form is the outgrowth of the lowest, that the kinship is universal from monad to man, it is impossible to tell where the line should be drawn between the human and the non-human—

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

for none can say where or when, as life unfolded, the human was born from the beast—and, accordingly, it has become more difficult than it was of yore to believe in the immortality of the soul.

The Brahmans and the Buddhists believe that the souls of men, according to their merit, are reincarnated into beasts more or less degraded, or into men of different stations from paupers to kings, or into divinities. But this doctrine of transmigration, which accords souls subject to elevation and degradation to animals and men, sheds no light on the origin and nature of the soul. And if it be true, as Buddhists believe, that Sakyamuni, before he became Buddha, underwent five hundred and fifty births, in which he was a fish, a frog, a hermit, an elephant, a slave, an ape, a king, we need not wonder that the Buddhists long for annihilation. There can be little consolation in the belief that one's soul may, in the next generation, dwell in the body of a lizard. The prospect of eternal nothingness would be vastly better than this.

One of the few men of science who in recent years have given their assent to the belief in a future life is Sir Oliver Lodge. While scouting as a superstition the idea of the resurrection of the body, Sir Oliver yet clings to the immortality of the soul. In his book "Science and Immortality," he defines the soul as being "that controlling and guiding principle which is responsible

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

for our personal expression, and for the construction of the body under the restrictions of physical conditions and ancestry;” and he allows that this principle “seems identical with the principle of life.” Unfortunately, this definition includes too much. It includes all animals and plants as well as human beings. For if the principle of life that fashioned men in accordance with heredity and environment is to live forever, then the principle that shaped the poison ivy, or the beast of the jungle, under the action of the same laws, must be immortal for the same reason. Seeing that this objection can be urged against his position, that according to his doctrine it can be held “that all living things must possess some rudiment of soul,” Sir Oliver avows: “Well, for myself, I do not see how to draw a hard-and-fast distinction between one form of life and another.” Accordingly, the eminent scientist appears to be perfectly willing to share the joys of immortality with the souls of beasts. Imagine the ecstasy of eternal existence with the ghosts of all the beasts that have moved across earth’s swarming stage since life appeared upon this globe—all the curious, weird and monstrous creatures that have inhabited the ocean, earth and air—things armed with fangs and claws to rend their living prey, from lizards to vultures, from the vanished monsters of prehistoric times whose tremendous skeletons now excite wonder in mu-

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

seums, to the poison serpents that crush their hapless victims in slimy coils! For such a heaven doubtless few will yearn.

Sir Oliver Lodge has great confidence in telepathy, visions, dreams, clairvoyance, materializations, and other supposed spirit phenomena as means by which it may be proved that life continues after death. The great physicist is indeed an ardent devotee of Spiritualism, the extravagant claims of which he accepts with unquestioning delight. But telepathy—the transference of thought from one mind to another without the assistance of the senses—has never in a single instance been proved. Every scientific attempt to demonstrate it has failed. But if the reality of telepathy were established beyond question, it would merely extend our knowledge of the powers of the brain; it would not, it could not, prove the continuance of consciousness after the dissolution of the body. Dreams are wanderings of the mind among the images of memory when the curtain of consciousness is not drawn quite down in perfect sleep. Visions are day dreams—hallucinations—pictures from the walls of memory projected into the empty air. Dreams and visions, with their freakish and fallacious forms, are born within the brain and are impotent to prove that we shall live after we are dead. As to clairvoyance, it is sufficient to say that Spiritualist mediums have told the world nothing that

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

was not or could not have been known to some living person.

Sir Oliver Lodge offers as evidence of a future life the materialization of spirits—ghosts from the spirit world that appear at the beck of mediums in the darkness of Spiritualist séances. But here facts give us pause. First, these materialized spirits—like all other ghosts—always appear clothed—a fact by which a ghost might easily be mistaken for a live person. Secondly, Maskelyne, the English conjurer, could produce as healthy-looking materializations as any ever produced by mediums. And thirdly, wherever intrepid and critical spectators have been able to seize the materialized form, they have confirmed their suspicion that the ghost and the medium were one and the same person.

In “Raymond,” Sir Oliver Lodge gives the world alleged communications from the spirit of his son Raymond, who was killed in the war in 1915. According to these messages, which come from Mrs. Leonard, the medium, who says her “guide” in the spirit world is an Indian girl named Feda, the spirits have bodies and organs as in the flesh—arms and legs, eyes, ears, tongue and teeth! These spirits wear clothes—Raymond’s suit is made of decayed worsted. His house is made of bricks, and there is granite in that spirit land. There are laboratories there, where all sorts of things are manufactured, in-

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

cluding cigars which the spirits smoke! "Some want meat, and some strong drink," says Raymond. "They call for whiskey sodas. Don't think I'm stretching it when I tell you that they manufacture even that." And this place where there is smoking, eating, and the bibbing of "whiskey sodas," where people clothed in worsted live in brick houses, is the land of discarnate spirits! And Sir Oliver Lodge, the man of science, having outgrown the dogmas of Christianity, kneels in the temple of the superstition of Spiritualism and gives such lying drivel the countenance of his honored name.

To such a degree is the literature of Spiritualism blasted with banalities, so stupid, inane and false are the messages attributed to the great geniuses dead, so unattractive is the picture it presents of the spirit world, that with reference to the question the great Huxley was constrained to say: "The only good that I can see in the demonstration of the truth of Spiritualism is to furnish an additional argument against suicide."

No communication from an alleged discarnate spirit has ever been received under circumstances which guaranteed its genuineness. Every scientific test made to establish the existence of spirits has yielded disappointing results. Mr. F. W. H. Myers, an enthusiast of Psychical Research, left a letter sealed in several envelopes with his bankers, hoping to reveal its contents from the

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

spirit world through a medium. But when Mrs. Verrall, in 1905, fourteen years after the letter was written, received through automatic writing what she believed to be the contents of the letter coming from the spirit of Mr. Myers, the two messages, compared at a special meeting of the Society of Psychical Research, were found to be totally dissimilar. Then too, it must be remembered that slate writing, spirit photography, table tilting, and all the mechanical "phenomena" of the séance, can be produced by various kinds of trickery; that it is as easy to get a "spirit message" from a living person as from a dead one—provided the medium thinks the person dead; and that nearly all the famous mediums, from the Fox sisters to Eusapia Palladino, have been exposed as frauds. One is not surprised, therefore, at Sir Oliver Lodge's confession that "by the mass of scientific men the whole subject is at present ignored, because it seems an elusive and disappointing inquiry."

But is there not at least, something strange in Spiritualism? Suppose there is. There is something strange in hypnotism. And Dr. J. Milne Bramwell, the master hypnotist, is convinced that what Spiritualists regard as the manifestation of spiritual beings, is due to the action of the subconscious mind of the medium, which becomes active in the trance. Mr. Frank Podmore, the expert psychical researcher, agreed with this view.

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

Notwithstanding his supposition that mind might be a foreign entity in the brain, Professor William James, in his posthumous volume of "Memories and Studies," declared that after twenty-five years of Psychical Research, he was still "no 'further' than at the beginning" as to the question whether the soul survives bodily death. Professor James quotes Professor Sidgwick as saying that after twenty-five years of psychical investigation he was still "in the same identical state of doubt and balance that he started with." These are eloquent admissions. In his book "The Belief in Personal Immortality" Mr. E. S. P. Haynes observes that "Psychical Research has, so far, done nothing but extend the region of experimental psychology." The scientific study of the mind has, as yet, discovered no evidence of a future life.

In "The Bankruptcy of Religion" Mr. Joseph McCabe, after pointing out that modern philosophy arose in the endeavor to establish on the ground of reason the existence and attributes of God and the immortality of the soul, draws attention to the significant fact that discussion of these questions has now passed out of the literature of philosophy. "You might," says Mr. McCabe, "attend the lectures on philosophy for a whole year at any great modern university—at Oxford or Cambridge, at Columbia or Harvard, at Paris or Berlin—and you would hear no more about

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

God and the soul than you would hear in the lectures on physiology." The verdict of philosophy is that neither the existence of God nor the immortality of the soul can be determined by the intellect.

Professor James H. Leuba, in "The Belief in God and Immortality," shows statistically from replies to a questionnaire addressed by him to American scientists, historians, sociologists and psychologists, that those who either do not believe in or doubt immortality number among the physical scientists 49.3%; among the biologists 63%; among the historians 48.5%; among the greater professors of sociology 72.9%; and among the psychologists 80.2%. It is significant too, that the more eminent the men in any of these departments of study, the greater is the proportion of unbelievers among them.

We are frequently told that the desire for a future life is universal and that this desire must prove its reality. But the truth is that the belief in immortality is far from being universal. It is not found among the Veddahs of Ceylon, some native Australian races, and other primitive peoples. It is not found in Buddhism, the religion of one-third of the human race—the Buddhists long for Nirvana—the cessation of existence. It is absent alike from the ancient religion of China and from Confucianism. And millions in the western world neither believe in nor desire it.

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

But suppose the desire for immortality were universal. That certainly would not prove its truth. History teems with unsatisfied desire. As John Stuart Mill observed, the desire for food is no indication that we shall have an everlasting supply of it.

The desire for immortality is strongest in youth. In youth, when daring thought is at the zenith of its power, when the sun of ambition illuminates the hope of things to be achieved, when life's contests are made joyous by the glamour of success, a high sense of our importance courses swiftly through the veins; we are egotistic; we feel the restless urge of life and wish it to continue. But in old age when the strength to strive is gone, when the mind regrets the vanished power of its golden years, when life's prizes and applause pass the trembling palm to rest in steady hands, when the weary traveler with doddering step nears the foot of the downward hill, his tired eyes no longer yearn to see; and as the shadows of night fall athwart the lessening rays of life's departing sun, the old man is content to lay his burden down in sleep.

They say another life is necessary to right the wrongs of this. But why should we suppose that the power that gave us this life will treat us better in another? What warrant have we for supposing that the victims of injustice here, would fare better there? Justice and injustice

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

are but human terms; Nature seems unconscious of their meaning; and there is no reason for believing that the ills endured in this world will be atoned for in another.

And is it not pertinent to ask: If immortality be true, how old shall we be in that endless life? Will the babe that died in its mother's arms be a helpless babe forever? Will those who passed the bourne of time palsied with old age be eternally decrepit? Or will all enjoy life at its glowing noon? And what shall be our condition there? Since we can not take our present bodies, shall we have other bodies? If yes, will those bodies be exactly like these? Then, will those born deaf and dumb endure these handicaps forever? Will the idiotic be denied the light of reason while the aeons of time roll away? But if we are not to have bodies, are we to suppose that we shall see without eyes, hear without ears, feel without fingers, and converse without organs of speech?

And what shall we do to while away the time? shall we just lounge around forever? Would not endless existence without work drive us mad with ennui?

If all the human beings that ever lived are to be immortal may we not have difficulty in finding our friends? And are we sure that we shall know them?

In a lecture on “Immortality” delivered at

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

Harvard University in 1906, Professor Wilhelm Ostwald declared that the possibility of remembrance after death seems to be out of the question. But if there is no remembrance, personality will be gone, and immortality without personality would not be immortality at all. Impersonal immortality would be the immortality of a clod. If memory perishes all is lost. But how shall we remember with our nervous system gone? Yet nerves and brain can not endure.

Where is this land in which we shall live again? Certainly it is not in this world. Then is it on some other planet in our solar group? Or is it in some ethereal region in the interstellar space millions of light years distant from our globe? Truly, the most amazing thing about another life is our stark ignorance of it.

Christians believe that immortality is vouched for by the Bible. Let us see. The belief was not a part of the religion of the ancient Jews, and the Old Testament denies it. In Job, chapter seven, verse nine, we read: "As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more." Ecclesiastes, after saying in the third chapter that "a man has no preeminence above a beast," that "all go unto one place," that "all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again," says in chapter nine: "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten."

"But my belief is based on the New Testament, on the promises of Christ," says the Christian. But nobody knows who made the supposed promises of Christ, and, at any rate, they have not been kept. In Matthew 24:34, in Mark 13:30, and in Luke 21:32, Christ, after describing his second coming "in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory," is made to say: "This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." But that generation did pass, and three score more have followed it, and Christ—if he ever came—and this is a matter of increasing doubt—has not returned to bless his followers with another life. It remains written, of course, that "In my Father's house are many mansions;" but the telescope, sweeping the heavens for billions of miles, past myriads of constellations, has failed to discover the Father's mansioned home.

It is of interest to note that according to Christianity, our immortal life does not begin at death, but at some indefinite time thereafter. There is to be a resurrection of the dead, followed by a general judgment, before immortality begins. But the Bible does not say, and no one can tell, when the resurrection is to be. In the meantime the dead are dead—their souls are as unconscious as their dust. Now fancy the men and

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

women of all the vanished ages since death first stilled the human heart, being resurrected and judged, sometime, perhaps, in the next thousand million years! Think of the joy we should feel in the contemplation that after we have been dead perhaps a million ages, we shall be made to live again! Truly, this is a forlorn hope. Christianity to all intents and purposes offers us not certain immortality but gilded annihilation. Another life is of interest only as the continuation of this. If extinction is to overtake us at the tomb that death may as well be eternal.

There is another thing to be considered. While Christianity promises everlasting joy to the few who believe its creed, it prophesies eternal pain for nearly all the world. It predicts that while the saved strum harps in selfish glee throughout the endless flight of years, the moans of millions damned will rise forever from the holocaust designed by a vengeful God's undying hate. These are the Christians destinies—this, according to Christianity, is to be the life eternal in heaven and in hell. But such an immortality, far from being a blessing, would be a measureless curse. Infinitely better is annihilation for all than that one person should suffer eternal pain. The Christian heaven is a selfish dream; and hell is but the hollow threat of pious fiends. The Bible knows nothing of a life to come!

The truth is that the doctrine of immortality

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

owes nothing to Christianity. Thousands of years before Christ was born, before a line of the Bible was written, countless millions of men and women lived and died hoping for another life. It was from the Persians—from the worshippers of Zoroaster—that the Jews derived the doctrine of immortality. The hope of another life is not a Christian dogma but a pagan dream. And if the dream be true, if when we die here we enter into life in some other sphere, the fact has nothing to do with any religion. It can not be affected by belief or disbelief. It is a fact in nature—like the growth of vegetation, or the light of the stars—an attribute of the cosmic order. It exists for everyone. It is our fate. Eternal and unchangeable is the destiny that awaits us all.

Let us remember, too, that even if we could prove that there is a life after death, that fact would not establish the truth of immortality. For it might be that old age and death wait upon life in that world as in this; the average life might be no longer there than here; and that second death might close the story of each life forever.

There is a question more. Is immortality desirable? Can we look forward with pleasure to an endless life of which we have no conception? This life is blessed with the assurance that death will terminate its woes. But what if eternal life should prove unsatisfactory? What if, at last,

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

weary of existence, we should long to die? Then joy would turn to ashes—endless life would resolve itself into an endless curse. The thought is dreadful!

But the facts of nature seem to prove that we shall not live again. “We are forced to this definite conclusion:” says Haeckel, in “The Riddle of the Universe,” “The belief in the immortality of the human soul is a dogma which is in hopeless contradiction with the most solid empirical truths of modern science.” Professor Proctor, the astronomer, wrote: “Herbert Spencer shows abundantly the nothingness of the evidence on which the common belief in a future life has been based.” Professor Tyndall put the whole argument in a line: “Divorced from matter, where is life to be found?” Nor are scientists and philosophers alone in recognizing the fact that the laws of nature seem to deny the possibility of a future life. The Reverend Minot J. Savage said: “Have we any proof of immortality? . . I cannot think we have anything which may be called evidence concerning an immortal life. . . Immortality is not susceptible of proof.” The Reverend R. Heber Newton declared: “We know nothing of life that is disembodied. . . We know nothing of mind apart from matter. . . I have no confidence in any faith which is not capable of a scientific basis.”

The belief in immortality has been fearfully

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

expensive to mankind. For many ages it made humanity the slaves of priests. Lured by the glamour of heaven, millions have neglected the concerns of this life for the fancied interests of another. Recoiling from the withering threat of hell, millions have spent their days in superstitious fear. The religious persecutions that have drenched the face of earth with tears and blood, the religious wars with their ruin and desolation, the sectarian hate and strife that have embittered human relations, have been born of the belief that this life is but a prelude to another. With the passing of the belief in immortality, freedom grows, knowledge increases, sects merge into humanity, and everywhere, as the mind of man enlarges the world's moral tone improves.

Is there a life after death? There does not appear to be. The clods fall on the coffin and we leave our dead in the tomb. Their flesh is decomposed; their bones disintegrate and disappear. A few years pass, and Nature has fully reabsorbed the forms we knew and loved. Yesterday they lived; to-day we are here; tomorrow others will hold the stage. Nature moves from birth to death, and life and death appear to round the circle of existence.

Why should we live forever? Why should Nature have selected us to share the banquet of everlasting existence? What have we done to deserve immortality? Why should we desire it?

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

No other forms in nature are permanent: Why should we regard ourselves as destined to enjoy eternal life? All other things perish: Why should we endure? The globe on which we live will become a cold and crusted rock and all things on its bosom will die; the moon will fall back to the frigid breast of mother earth; the sun will lose his stores of heat and wheel in space a lifeless orb; the night and the day will be equally dark; the light of the stars will be extinguished one by one. Millions of ages will roll like mighty billows surging in time's boundless sea, and with the lapse of illimitable aeons, the face of the universe will be changed. Suns and worlds, cold and dead, colliding with other decrepit spheres, will be shattered to the primal fire-mist and give birth to solar systems, which, through myriads of ages of evolution will become brilliant suns and fruitful worlds. New moons will take their places in the heavens. Day and night will be born again. Animals and plants, called to life by Nature's laws of growth, will again fill the worlds. Other millions of ages will pass away, and when Time's cycle is again complete, darkness and death will again ensue; the corridors of space will again resound with the crashing of extinct orbs, giving birth to nebulae and presaging once more the rhythmic coming of suns and planets clothed with luxurious vegetation and crowned with animal life in all its forms. So the

## IS THERE A LIFE AFTER DEATH?

work of Nature—the eternal builder, the everlasting destroyer—will go on forever. Form taking shape in the formless; life arising from the dust; death everywhere overtaking life; and in the end chaos with the potential power and the promise of the new order.

And where shall we be while this awful drama of Nature's endless change is being enacted on a stage as wide as the infinite vast, in a time that is eternal? When our bodies and brains have been melted to vapor a thousand times over in the crash and heat of colliding suns, shall our poor, naked, and unprotected souls still be occupying some icy region among the waxing and waning stars and gazing still with unsatisfied eyes upon the infinite wonder of the changing scene? While the Universe is everywhere dying, shall we live on forever? Forever! Who would choose to live for that infinite time? Eternity! Do we know what this awful word must mean? To live for eternity! The collective intelligence of all the worlds can not conceive in millionth part the meaning of that appalling thought. Immortal life! The mind reels and falls beneath the weight of the crushing contemplation. Immortality! The thought repels the weary soul that longs to be at rest in the undisturbed sleep of the tranquil grave.

## ONE HUNDRED CONTRADICTIONS IN THE BIBLE

I believe we ought to know the truth about the Bible. If the Bible is true, the truth cannot harm it. If the Bible is not true, the world should be so informed. If we have not the right to know the truth about that book, who has the right to know it? If we have not the right to tell that truth, who has the right to tell it? If the time has not come to face this intellectual question in a fearless, intellectual way, when shall that time arrive? Has not ignorance ruled the world long enough? Has not superstition had her day of rioting in the human brain?

We live in a new age. New knowledge and new hope are flooding the world with the light of new ideals. We build better as we learn more. Our time demands intellectual democracy. The prosperity of the world depends upon widespread knowledge and freedom; and the greater the number of free minds, the greater the number of free men.

The Bible is still the greatest of enslavers. It is still a fetter on the brain of millions who believe in it, and a lock on the lips of millions who have outgrown its myths and follies. Many

## ONE HUNDRED CONTRADICTIONS

are prevented from engaging in scientific studies by their fear of disagreeing with the Bible; many dare not express their honest thought for fear that believers in the Bible will visit them with political, social, or financial loss.

Even the clergy are the bondmen of their own book! There is not a preacher in any orthodox church who can tell the truth about the Bible and retain his position. His salary depends upon his silence concerning all that differs from the creed. The preacher must stifle his doubts. If he is intelligent, he must preach what he does not believe. In this way, the church is the great creator of hypocrisy, and the Bible, the Paper Pope of the Protestants, is a barrier to the progress of the world.

For this reason the truth about the Bible should be told. Every man and every woman should know what that book is, and what it is not. There is no virtue in hugging a delusion. Falsehood cannot be a firm foundation. A lie cannot be holy even though it is old and sanctified. Let us know the truth! Let us stand erect in the presence of the Bible and ask it to reveal its real character.

Strictly speaking, the Bible is not a book; it is a literature—the collected writings of a nation. Its many parts were written at various times during the interval of a thousand years. How many its writers were, or who they were, we do

## IN THE BIBLE

not know. But we do know that it abounds in miracles and magic; that it is utterly unscientific; and that it is so full of contradictions that almost anything can be proved from its pages.

We know, too, that the doctrine of inspiration was invented by Jewish and Christian priests. The Bible presents no better claim to be considered the word of God than the Vedas, the Zend-Avesta, the Koran, the Book of Mormon, or any one of many other books regarded by their believers as the revelation of heaven.

If the Bible were the word of God, it would be a perfect book. It would be consistent with itself and in accord with the facts of nature. God could not contradict himself and remain God. Contradiction is human; Deity must be infallible. A contradiction betrays a limitation of knowledge—a conflict of opinion. Where there is contradiction, there is antagonism of thought—a warfare of mind against mind. Both terms of a contradiction cannot be true; but they may both be false.

Christianity claims that the Bible is absolutely true, and that it is sinful to disbelieve it. As a matter of fact, it contains more contradictions than any other book any Christian ever saw; and these contradictions prove—if they prove anything—that its writers did not believe one another.

A brief discourse cannot discuss all the con-

## ONE HUNDRED CONTRADICTIONS

tradictions of the Bible; but to deal with about a hundred of them should and will enable you to draw your own conclusions as to the doctrine of inspiration, and the sincerity or intelligence of the orthodox clergy.

In the first chapter of Genesis, there is a legendary account of the creation. In the second chapter, beginning with the fourth verse, there is another account. These legends contradict each other at every point. In the first, the earth is represented as coming into existence completely enveloped in water. In the second, it is represented as being originally a dry plain, lacking even moisture.<sup>1</sup> According to the first account, all the fowls of the air were created out of water—"and God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth". . . and the waters brought forth "every winged fowl after his kind." But according to the second account, the fowls were created out of the ground—"And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air."<sup>2</sup> The first story has it that the trees were made on the third day, and that man was formed three days later. The second story declares that man was made before the trees.<sup>3</sup>

If the first account is true, the fowls were

- |                                |                       |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Gen. 1:2, 9; 2:6            | 2. Gen. 1:20,21; 2:19 |
| 3. Gen. 1:12,13, 26-31; 2:7,9. |                       |

## IN THE BIBLE

created before man. If the second is correct, they were created after man.<sup>4</sup> The first tale distinctly teaches that man was created after all the beasts. The second is as positive in its assurance that man was formed before the beasts.<sup>5</sup> In the first account, we are told that man and woman were created at the same time, by one act of creation, and after all other things had been made. In the second story, it is explained that the man was made alone; that the woman was not formed until the man had failed to find a wife among the beasts, and that the making of the man, before the beasts, and of the woman, after the beasts, constituted two distinct acts of creation.<sup>6</sup> According to the first account, the man and the woman were given the freedom of the world, and were told to subdue it. According to the second, they were confined within the narrow limits of a garden.<sup>7</sup> Read the first account with care, and you will observe that in it the creator is always called "God." Read the second story, and you will see that he is invariably called "Lord God."<sup>8</sup>

What is the meaning of all these contradictions? Simply this: two writers, both ignorant of the facts of nature, have endeavored, seriously or in romance, to account for the origin of the world. Poetic fancy has woven myths out of

4. Gen. 1:21,27; 2:7,19

7. Gen. 1:28; 2:15

5. Gen. 1:25,27; 2:7,19

8. Gen. 1:1 to 23; 2:4

6. Gen. 1:25,27; 2:7, 20-22

## ONE HUNDRED CONTRADICTIONS

ignorance. Knowing nothing of what the first man had guessed, the second wrote down what he supposed, and he wrote in such a way that, had he written with the express purpose of contradicting all the first man said, he could not have succeeded more admirably. Honest people who know very little about science, and theologians who are well informed in scientific matters, tell us that Genesis and geology agree to perfection. The truth is that the two stories in Genesis destroy each other; and both are worthless in the light of science. The world and its forms of life have been produced by a slow process of evolution, and there never was any miraculous creation.

In the seventh chapter of Genesis, at the second verse, it is stated that Noah was commanded to take into the ark seven males and seven females of all clean beasts. In the fifth verse, we are assured that Noah did as he was told. But in the eighth and ninth verses, it is stated that of clean beasts there went into the ark only two and two—a male and a female.<sup>9</sup>

According to the ninth chapter, the murderer must die; yet God “set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.”<sup>10</sup> The ninth chapter also says: “Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you;” but the fourteenth chapter of Deuteronomy gives a list of animals,

9. Gen. 7:2,5; Gen. 7:8,9      10. Gen. 9:5,6; Gen. 4:15

## IN THE BIBLE

birds and fish that we must not eat.<sup>11</sup>

To Abraham, God is represented as having said: "This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; every man child among you shall be circumcised." But a gentleman of the name of St. Paul, writing in the Epistle to the Galatians, knew more about circumcision than God, and therefore wrote: "Behold, I, Paul, say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing."<sup>12</sup>

We are told that the Bible is God's inspired word, and that it points out the way of salvation; and yet the Bible itself abolishes the word of God, and declares that those who do as God commands cannot be saved! The same inspired book assures us that God promised Abraham all the land of Canaan, and that he gave him none of it whatever;<sup>13</sup> that Abraham had a wife whose name was Keturah; that Keturah was only his concubine;<sup>14</sup> that Abraham had two sons, Ishmeal and Isaac; that Isaac was Abraham's only son;<sup>15</sup> that Abraham bought a burying-place from the sons of Emmor; that the sepulcher was bought, not by Abraham, but by Jacob.<sup>16</sup> If you should fail to see the beautiful harmony in all these contradictions, remember that, ac-

11. Gen. 9:3, Deut. 14:7,19 12. Gen. 17:10; Gal. 5:2

13. Gen. 17:8; Acts 7:5 14. Gen. 25:1; I Chron. 1:32

15. Gen. 16:15; 21:3; Heb. 11:17

16. Acts 7:16; Josh. 24:32

## ONE HUNDRED CONTRADICTIONS

cording to the church, it is because you are carnally minded, and lacking in spiritual discernment!

If the Bible were a revelation from God, it would surely be consistent in what it has to say of God. Every statement would agree with every other statement, and every attribute and quality described would unite in the portrayal of a character clearly distinguishable, easily understood, and infinitely grand. But as to the nature, character and conduct of God, the Bible asserts only to deny, and describes only to destroy. In the Old Testament, God is like a man—he walks and talks and eats and mingles with men of affairs. In the New, he is a spirit, and his everlasting seat is heaven's throne.

In Exodus 33:20, God is made to say: "Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me and live." This is contradicted in Genesis 32:30, where Jacob declares: "I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved."<sup>17</sup> God must have been mistaken. To look him in the face was not sure death. Jacob looked on his visage, and Jacob's health remained unimpaired. God was seen by others also. In the twenty-fourth chapter of Exodus, we read: "Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and they saw the God of Israel. . . They saw God and did eat

17. Gen. 32:30; Ex. 33:20

## IN THE BIBLE

and drink.'’ This, however, is declared to be false in John 1:18—“No man hath seen God at any time.” How shall we decide? For my part, I agree with John.<sup>18</sup> The probabilities are his way. An infinite God could better employ his time than in wandering through the universe every little while to converse with some barbarians in Palestine; and it ought to be safe to assume that a God would choose better company. Why should he be engaged in performing tricks of magic in the Syrian desert for a tribe of polygamous nomads, when he might have been talking to the Wise Men of Greece?

Where does God dwell? “Dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto,” says 1 Timothy 6:16. Not so, declares 1 Kings 8:12—“The Lord said that he would dwell in the thick darkness.” These statements cannot both be true.<sup>19</sup> Dazzling light and total darkness are opposite extremes. God cannot dwell in both. It is indeed taught in one of the Psalms that God is omnipresent. “Whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.” But in Genesis, the Psalmist

18. Ex. 24:9,10,11; John 1:18

19. I Tim. 6:16; I Kings 8:12

## ONE HUNDRED CONTRADICTIONS

is contradicted. God is not omnipresent; he moves from place to place. "And the Lord said, because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know."<sup>20</sup> The God of the Psalmist filled the universe with his presence. The writer of Genesis believed in a local tribal God of personal form—a God whose knowledge was limited like that of a human being, and who walked about the earth in the role of Sherlock Holmes.

Think of an infinite God. dowered with the knowledge of all the worlds, appointing himself as a Vice Commission and going to a little village to study its social affairs! Think of his saying: "I will go and see; and if not, I will know!" Those who believe in inspiration surely lack the sense of humor. Orthodoxy is solemn and stupid. Heresy thinks and smiles.

Matthew tells us that "with God all things are possible." The Book of Judges disagrees. It holds in chapter one, verse nineteen, that God is not almighty—"And the Lord was with Judah; and he drove out the inhabitants of the mountain; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron."<sup>21</sup> If the omnipotent God could not prevail

20. Psalm 139:7-10; Gen. 18:20,21

21. Matt. 19:26; Judges 1:19

## IN THE BIBLE

against a few carts cased with metal, what would happen to him if he attacked a modern battleship? If we say that God is all-powerful, does our statement become inspired when we explain that his strength was baffled by a human device?

In Exodus 31:17, God is represented as being like a man, inasmuch as work tires him and he is refreshed with rest—"For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed." According to Isaiah, this is not true. Isaiah will allow no such contemptible weakness to limit the glory of his God. In the fortieth chapter of his book, he exclaims: "Hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary."<sup>22</sup> To be tired, to need rest, to be refreshed, are human attributes—the qualities of beings capable of change. An infinite God must be unchangeable—he cannot tire; he cannot be refreshed. Isaiah makes this claim for God, but Exodus denies it.

Moreover, we have the express testimony of Scripture that God does not change. In James 1:17, we read of "the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." This, however, is sweepingly contradicted in Jonah 3:10. It is there shown that God does change—"And God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them; and

22. Ex. 31:17; Is. 40:28

## ONE HUNDRED CONTRADICTIONS

he did it not.”<sup>23</sup> Again, we are confidently assured in Numbers 23:19, that “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent.” But so heartily does God disagree with those who say he does not change, that in Jeremiah 15:6 he volunteers this striking information: “I am weary with repenting.” How human is this confession!<sup>24</sup> Imagine an infinite, eternal, and unchangeable God avowing himself to be “weary with repenting”! Is God a being of narrowly limited intelligence? Does he lack resolution and self-reliance? Is he of fickle disposition—inconstant and uncertain? If he is not, then he never was “weary with repenting.”

Does God know the hearts of men? The question is fair; the answer should be exact. How does the Bible answer? It tells us that he does, and that he does not. In Acts we read: “Thou Lord which knowest the hearts of all men.” The contrary is found in Deuteronomy, where it is said that God led the Jews forty years in the wilderness, to humble them, to prove them, and to know what was in their hearts.<sup>25</sup> God either knows the hearts of men, or he does not. If he does, the statement in the eighth chapter of Deuteronomy is not true; if he does not, then he is not a real God, but a myth.

23. James 1:17; Jonah 3:10 24. Num. 23:19; Jer. 15:6

25. Acts 1:24; Deut. 8:2

## IN THE BIBLE

Perhaps it is a peculiarity of inspiration, not only to defy the laws of logic, but to prove the truth of its assertions by denying them!

The same inspired book informs us that God is generous with his gifts—"If any of you lack wisdom," says James, "let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally." If God gives to all men liberally, how can it be that he renders some men incapable of receiving his good things, to deprive them of his blessings? If John tells the truth, that is what he does—"He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted and I should heal them."<sup>26</sup> Can this be real? If God wants men to know his truth, why should he blind their eyes? If he desires their conversion, why should he harden their hearts? On the other hand, if God has no message for the world, if he is indifferent as to human fate, what is the mission of the Bible? What is the meaning of Christianity?

We read in Deuteronomy that "God is a consuming fire," and in John that "God is love."<sup>27</sup> Reason fails to conceive of a God who is either; but how great is the contrast here! A consuming fire is a wave of ruin. It advances to destroy. Home, wealth and life turn to ashes in its path. Behind its awful sweep there is but death and

26. James 1:5; John 12:40 27. Deut. 4:24; I John 4:1

## ONE HUNDRED CONTRADICTIONS

desolation. How different is love—the tenderest passion of the human soul! Love raises the mind to lofty aims, and fills the heart with joy. Finding its ideal in the true, the beautiful and the good, it grows in likeness to the things it worships. It is the noblest of the virtues, and all its aspirations are as pure as the silver stream from the morning sun. A God who could be likened unto a consuming fire would be a ferocious fiend; a God of love would be a tender father.

Although Deuteronomy holds such a terrible opinion of God, it tells us in a later chapter that he is “a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right.” Yet this same book declares in its fourteenth chapter, that God gave the Jews the following commandment: “Ye shall not eat of anything that dieth of itself: thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto an alien.”<sup>28</sup> Such a precept is offered as evidence that God is “just and right”—is it? A God who is “without iniquity” said: “Do not eat the flesh of an ox that died of itself; but sell it to an alien”—did he? Is it really probable that God ever uttered such a command? Is it not more reasonable to believe that some pious Israelite, with an economic turn of mind, did not like to eat carrion himself and hated to miss the profit

28. Deut. 32:4; 14:21

## IN THE BIBLE

it would bring, and so claimed divine authority for selling Embalmed Beef?

In the nineteenth Psalm it is said that, "The law of the Lord is perfect. . . . The statutes of the Lord are right. . . . The commandment of the Lord is pure." If this is true, God cannot be the author of evil. But according to Isaiah, it is not true. In his forty-fifth chapter, Isaiah makes God contradict the Psalmist—"I make peace and create evil: I the Lord do all these things." Amos stands with Isaiah—"Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?"<sup>29</sup> So, my Christian friend, the next time you hear your preacher blaming the devil for the evil of the world, do not forget to remind him that, according to the Bible, God is the creator of evil.

When we ask the Scriptures what they have to say as to the attitude of God toward peace and war, we are answered with another contradiction. "The God of peace," says Romans; not so, says Exodus, "The Lord is a man of war."<sup>30</sup>

But is not God kind and merciful? Does he not soothe the troubled brow of age with the calming consciousness of his protecting care? Does he not smile with pity on the tender helplessness of the prattling babe? And does he not

29. Psalm 19:7,8; Is. 45:7; Amos 3:6

30. Rom. 15:33; Ex. 15:3

## ONE HUNDRED CONTRADICTIONS

fill with the sunshine of his wondrous love the sorrowing mother's aching heart? Oh, yes—"The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." Oh, no—such is the cruelty of God that no human need can stop or stay the march of his destructive fury. Contemplate these frightful words: "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass."<sup>31</sup> Was ever a more heartless command issued by the chief of a cannibal tribe?

Slay the old man with trembling hands and silvered hair; murder the mother who shields with her body the life of her child; rifle the cradle, and plunge the glittering sword of death through the frail form of the smiling babe; kill even the cattle that feed in their stalls, and know, ye fiends of ruthless slaughter, ye but fulfill the command of the God whose "mercy endureth forever!" Such is the consistency of the Bible.

Let us, however, guard ourselves against taking these things too seriously. No God ever commanded massacre. We are simply dealing with the contradictions in the religious literature of an uncivilized people. To call such writings the inspired word of an all-wise Deity is an insult to the meanest intelligence!

We come now to God's anger. "His anger

31. Psalm 145:9; I Sam. 15:3

## IN THE BIBLE

endureth but a moment," says the Psalmist. This is denied without reserve in Jeremiah 17:4—"Ye have kindled a fire in mine anger which shall burn forever."<sup>32</sup> Forever! A very long moment indeed! What a unique disposition—forever angry! An immortal grouch! Of course, a real God could not be angry. Anger necessitates a change of mind. The Infinite could not change. What is called the anger of God is but the ignorance of man.

Does God ever tempt his children? James avers that he does not—"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." In spite of this, Genesis insists that God does tempt—"And it came to pass after these things that God did tempt Abraham."<sup>33</sup> How perfect is the consistency of inspiration! How could anybody but a wicked unbeliever doubt the divine origin of such a harmonious book!

Let us take another step. Is God truthful? Certainly we do not raise this question: it is asked merely because it is suggested by another contradiction in the Bible. In Numbers there is the emphatic affirmation that "God is not a man that he should lie." We can heartily agree with that statement. It is easy to believe that men have lied about God; in fact, we find many such

32. Psalm 30:5; Jer. 17:4 33. James 1:13; Gen. 22:1

## ONE HUNDRED CONTRADICTIONS

lies in the Bible, but it is hard to believe that God would lie. We will, however, let the Bible answer. The twenty-second chapter of First Kings is certain that God does lie—"Now, therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee."<sup>34</sup> In many other passages, God is represented as employing falsehood. If these passages are true, can God be worthy of respect? If they are false, can the Bible be inspired?

The Jewish religion was founded on sacrifice. When a man or a woman committed a sin, that sin had to be atoned for by the killing of an animal; that is to say, by a contribution to the larder of the priests. The altars of Jehovah ran red with blood. The smoke that rose from the burning flesh of lambs and bulls was incense in the nostrils of Israel's God. In Exodus, it is commanded: "And thou shalt offer every day a bullock for a sin offering for atonement." Numerous chapters of the Old Testament are devoted to the most minute details concerning these sacrifices. Take away from the Bible these offerings and sacrifices of rams, and doves, and bulls, and the religion of the Jews cannot be understood. And yet, in the seventh chapter of Jeremiah, the whole sacrificial system of the Jews is repudiated; its divine origin is denied;

34. Num. 23:19; I Kings 22:23

## IN THE BIBLE

and God declares that he never approved of it—“For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices.” And in these impassioned words, Isaiah denounces the sacrificial system: “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. . . . When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand? . . . Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me.”<sup>35</sup>

Consider the importance of this contradiction. In the chief books of the Old Testament—in the Pentateuch, the books of the Law—God is represented as the founder of an elaborate system of sacrifices; in chapter after chapter he is represented as giving the most precise instructions as to how the animals were to be killed, and what was to be done with their blood, their fat, and their flesh. But in the works of his leading prophets, all this is declared to be “vain” and an “abomination,” and is utterly swept away by the very God who is said to have been its author!

And this is called inspiration! God himself—according to the Bible—declares whole sections of the Bible to be false, yet man, in his stupid ignorance, hugs these falsehoods to his bosom, and in spite of God holds them to be inspired!

And what shall we say of the human sacrifices

35. Ex. 29:36; Jer. 7:22; Is. 1:11-13

## ONE HUNDRED CONTRADICTIONS

which the Bible commands? I know that in Deuteronomy the Jews are warned against sacrificing their sons and daughters. But in the last chapter of Leviticus human sacrifices are upheld in a very positive manner. It is there written that "no devoted thing, that a man shall devote unto the Lord of all that he hath, both of man and beast, and of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed. . . . but shall surely be put to death."<sup>36</sup> All living things devoted to God had to be sacrificed; human beings were devoted to him; therefore, human sacrifices formed a part of the worship of Jehovah. That human sacrifices were a part of the Jewish religion is further proved by Abraham's preparation to sacrifice Isaac, by Jephthah's sacrifice of his daughter, and by David's sacrifice of the seven sons of Saul.

Every man who has studied this question is aware that for ages the Jewish people, in their frightful superstition, immolated their children to appease their phantom God. If the Bible proves anything, it proves that the religion of the Jews was to the Jews at once a curse and a crime. Yet we are asked to believe that the blood-stained record of that religion, dictated by ignorance, superstition and fanaticism, is the infallible revelation of a God of love! How absurd is superstition! How audacious is ig-

36. Deut. 12:30,31; Lev. 27:28,29

## IN THE BIBLE

norance when perverted by an idiotic creed!

The New Testament is built upon the Old. The God who demanded human blood is the God if they would use their reason, if they would barbaric myth, the God to whom the Christians pray does not exist.

If Christians would be honest with themselves, if they would use their reason, if they would read the Bible without prejudice, and weigh its conflicting statements in the balance of common sense, they would become convinced that it is not a revelation, but the record of a nation's slow and painful progress from barbarism to civilization.

"The Bible is the best of all books," says the believer, "because it teaches that there is to be a resurrection and a future life." Well, before we make sure about this matter, let us see what the Bible has to say about it. According to John, the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth." The assurance is explicit. If these words are true, there is to be a resurrection from the dead. Are they true? Job affirms that they are not—"As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more."<sup>37</sup> Language could not be plainer. Job denies the resurrection with all the emphasis of conviction. Still more, we are

37. John 5:28,29; Job 7:9; Eccl. 3:19-22; 9:5

## ONE HUNDRED CONTRADICTIONS

told in Ecclesiastes than man has no preeminence above the beast; that man and beast enjoy the same breath; that they die the same death; that both return to the dust whence they came, and that a man's portion is the enjoyment of his works in this world. And is it not declared in the same book that "the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward?" The Old Testament denies immortality in language that is clear and emphatic. The New teaches it, only to make it an endless agony for nearly all the children of men!

From the many contradictions so far reviewed—contradictions that destroy the most vital doctrines of the Bible—contradictions that no ingenuity can explain away—contradictions that make the dogma of inspiration look like a departure from sanity—contradictions that prove, beyond the hope of doubt, that the Bible is a human book—from all these contradictions arises the question: Where is the harmony in the Bible? What does it affirm that it does not deny? And yet we have but touched the fringe of the Bible's inconsistency. We have had but a glimpse of the true character of the book that contains more contradictions than any other book the world has ever known.

Take up your Bible and read it. Read it as you would read any other book—with your eyes open, with your reasoning faculties awake, and

## IN THE BIBLE

with your mind determined to be honest. You will find in it all the contradictions that have been mentioned, and you will find hundreds more. You will find that because of man's wickedness, God drowned the world, and that for the same reason he resolved never to drown it again;<sup>38</sup> that God is no respector of persons, and that he hated Esau and loved Jacob before the brothers were born;<sup>39</sup> that the children shall suffer for the sins of their parents, and that no one shall bear any sins but his own;<sup>40</sup> that the Sabbath is holy and must be kept by all, and that every man must decide for himself whether any day is holy or not;<sup>41</sup> that certain men devoted to God must wear long hair, and that the wearing of long hair is a shame;<sup>42</sup> that it is wrong to judge others, and that others must be judged;<sup>43</sup> that we must never swear at all, and that we must always swear by the God of truth;<sup>44</sup> that a man may divorce his wife for one reason only, and that he may divorce her for any reason whatever;<sup>45</sup> that the Christian must honor his father and mother, and that he must hate his father and mother;<sup>46</sup> that the sin against the Holy Ghost will never be forgiven, and that those who believe in Christ "are justified from all things."<sup>47</sup>

38. Gen. 6:5-7; 8:21

41. Ex. 20:8; Rom. 14:5

39. Rom. 2:11; 9:13

42. Num. 6:5; I Cor. 11:14

40. Ex. 20:5; Ezek. 18:20

43. Matt. 7:1; I Cor. 6:2-4

44. Matt. 5:34; Is. 65:16

45. Matt. 5:32; Deut. 21:14; 24:1

46. Ex. 20:12; Luke 14:26 47. Mark 3:29; Acts 13:39

## ONE HUNDRED CONTRADICTIONS

You see, it will not do to press the Bible too closely for consistency. Being an inspired book, perhaps it ought not to be consistent. If it were consistent, it might be reasonable; and, being reasonable, we might believe it to have been written by men, since we acknowledge that men have written many reasonable books. When a thing is consistent and reasonable, we do not say it is inspired—we say it is logical, natural, and it may be that when a thing is inconsistent and unreasonable, we ought to call it divine!

Reason repudiates revelation. All that is natural, reasonable and true is a part of science. The unnatural, the unreasonable and the false belong to religion's realm of fancy.

Are we through with the contradictions of the Bible? Certainly not. "For there is no man that sinneth not," says I Kings. In other words, we are all sinners. But John does not believe this. In his first Epistle, he argues that, "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not. . . . He that committeth sin is of the devil."<sup>48</sup> According to John, there are some who do not sin. According to Kings, there are none. Let us see how this works out. If we are all sinners, and if all sinners are of the devil, then we are all of the devil—Christians and Freethinkers, sinners and saints. If Christians are "of the devil" only when they commit sins, and if they become the

48. I Kings 8:46; I John 3:6-8

## IN THE BIBLE

children of God, and “abide in him,” after each forgiveness, then it is evident that the average Christian changes his spiritual fathers a good many times a year!

We are told in the ninetieth Psalm, at verse ten, that “the days of our years are three score years and ten.” But hold a while—that is not true, for is it not written in Genesis six and three, that man’s “days shall be an hundred and twenty years”? Of course a small matter like fifty years ought not to make a noticeable difference in the life of the average man! We may therefore allow that trifle to pass as another evidence of inspiration.<sup>49</sup>

If we could believe the Bible, we might rest assured that the good man has nothing to fear, since Proverbs avows that “there shall no evil happen to the just.” But the sacred book cannot be trusted, for the case of Job contradicts the proverb. God acknowledged that Job was so perfect and upright, that there was “none like him in the earth”; and yet he delivereded him up to the tender mercies of the devil, who smote him “with sore boils from the sole of his foot to his crown.”<sup>50</sup> It would be interesting to hear some clergyman explain why God and the devil were on such friendly terms; why God, the infinitely good, abandoned Job, his most devoted worshipper, to the cruelty of his enemy, the

49. Psalm 90:10; Gen. 6:3 50. Prov. 12:21; Job 2:3-7

## ONE HUNDRED CONTRADICTIONS

devil; and why the virtuous Job was tortured by the vicious devil under the supervision of a righteous God!

Is not God a friend to his friends? Does he not shield the innocent from harm? The Psalmist tells us that he does—"For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved forever. . . . The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him: The Lord will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged. . . . Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace."

If these words were really true, if an infinite God stood guard over the welfare of the righteous, how different would be the history of the world! The worshippers of God have been robbed of their property and of their liberty by other worshippers of God. They have been imprisoned in loathsome dungeons; stretched on racks of torture until their joints were torn apart; and burned alive at slow fires, cursed and jeered by hypocrites and fiends. All the outrages that wickedness could suggest, all the agonizing tortures that inhuman ingenuity could devise, have been inflected by believers in God upon the loving, the virtuous and the brave—upon those who yearned to bring into the world the reign of wisdom, peace and righteousness. In a world where those who sought for truth had their eyes

## IN THE BIBLE

extinguished, where those who uttered honest words had their tongues torn out, where those who fought for freedom had molten lead poured into their ears, where those who took the side of mercy had their legs crushed in iron boots—in such a world, where liberty was chained to the dungeon floor, where virtue perished in the flames, it will not do to say that God protects his friends from the cruel persecutions of their foes.

While the groans of innocent suffering have pierced the clouds, God has been silent. While Christians tortured Christians with a zeal that was ferocious, the heavens have shown no sign of displeasure.

The Psalmist was mistaken. God has forsaken the righteous. The wicked have triumphed over them. They have been condemned and slain. The Bible admits this. In Hebrews, we are told of what the early saints endured—“They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented.”<sup>51</sup>

A God who leaves his saints to be “sawn asunder,” and “slain with the sword,” certainly does not deliver them from the hands of the wicked! Peter seems to have been ignorant of all this when he asked “Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is

51. Psalm 37:28,32,33,37; Heb. 11:37

## ONE HUNDRED CONTRADICTIONS

good?" But Paul was aware of God's neglect, when he contradicted Peter—"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."<sup>52</sup>

It is often proclaimed in churches, and set down in religious books, that the writers of the Bible wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Now, if these contradictions are the work of a spirit, may we not inquire into the nature of this spirit? What is he like? And how does he affect human beings? We have it from Paul, in Galatians, that "the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness." Very fine. That is one man's opinion. Turn now to the fifteenth chapter of Judges, and you will find that when "the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon" Samson, "he slew a thousand men."<sup>53</sup> Paul did not tell the whole truth. Perhaps he was not very well acquainted with the spirit. Be that as it may, in Samson's case the fruit of the spirit was not love or goodness, but murder. The spirit was not satisfied with less than a thousand lives! If Paul is not mistaken, and if Judges is correct, the spirit must be endowed with a dual personality—possibly he is the original of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde—and if he is the real author of the Bible, his changing character might account for its many contradictions!

As an historical book, the Bible stands alone.

52. I Peter 3:13; 2 Tim. 3:12

53. Gal. 5:22; Judges 15:14,15

## IN THE BIBLE

No secular historian has ever even tried to imitate its style. The remarkable method by which the Scriptures teach history seems to be confined to inspiration. To appreciate my meaning, compare the sixteenth chapter of First Kings with the sixteenth chapter of Second Chronicles. From the first you will learn that Baasha, king of Israel, died, and was succeeded by his son Elah, in the twenty-sixth year of the reign of Asa, king of Judah. The second will tell you that in the thirty-sixth year of Asa, Baasha, king of Israel, came up against Judah.<sup>54</sup> A king dies and is buried; his son succeeds him on the throne; and yet, ten years later, the dead king, is still alive conducting a military campaign! In truthful histories dead men stay dead. According to the Bible, when a man dies, he is just getting ready to start trouble!

Another peculiar contradiction deals with the age of Ahaziah. You will find it in the eighth chapter of Second Kings, and the twenty-second chapter of Second Chronicles. According to Kings, Jehoram died at the age of forty years, and was succeeded on the throne by his son Ahaziah, whose age was twenty-two. But if Chronicles is correct, Ahaziah was "forty and two years old when he began to reign."<sup>55</sup> He was, therefore, two years older than his father! Of course we can readily understand how easily

54. I Kings 16:6,8; 2 Chron. 16:1

55. 2 Kings 8:17,24,26; 2 Chron. 21:20; 22:1,2

## ONE HUNDRED CONTRADICTIONS

a boy could be two years older than his father. You are probably acquainted with many such boys. The point of real difficulty in connection with the story is the statement that Ahaziah was his father's youngest son; and it may be in place to ask: If a man's youngest son can be two years older than his father, how much older than his father could the oldest son be? A little "spiritual discernment" ought to enable the average preacher to answer this question.

The historical quarrel between Samuel, Kings and Chronicles is continued through many chapters. According to Samuel, God tempted David to take a census of the people of Israel and Judah; according to Chronicles, it was the devil who tempted him;<sup>56</sup> Samuel declares that David sinned in numbering the people; Kings insists that David never sinned except in the matter of Uriah;<sup>57</sup> Samuel holds that David paid for the threshing floor on which he offered sacrifice to God after numbering the people, fifty shekels of silver; Chronicles has it that he paid for the place six hundred shekels of gold;<sup>58</sup> in Kings it is stated that Asa and Jehoshaphat did not abolish the places of idolatrous worship; in Chronicles it is maintained that they did abolish them.<sup>59</sup>

The number of contradictions in the Bible is

56. 2 Sam. 24:1; I Chron. 21:1

57. 2 Sam. 24:17, I Kings 15:5

58. 2 Sam. 24:24; I Chron. 21:25

59. I Kings 15:14; 22:43; 2 Chron. 14:5; 17:6

## IN THE BIBLE

simply bewildering. In reading it, one is amazed at the blindness and folly of mankind in regarding it as the perfect and inspired word of God. On one page it tells us that Moses was the meekest man of his time; on another, that he ordered women and children to be butchered in cold blood.<sup>60</sup> In one place it assures us that all the horses of the Egyptians died of the plague of murrain; in another, that all the horses of the Egyptian army were used in pursuit of the Jews.<sup>61</sup> It tell us that Elijah, in a chariot of fire, ascended into heaven, and it asserts that Christ is the only man who ever made that ascension;<sup>62</sup> it speaks highly in favor of intoxicating liquors and it condemns them in language equally strong;<sup>63</sup> it teaches us to pray to avoid temptation, and it tells us to hail temptation with joy;<sup>64</sup> it praises wealth as a blessing and condemns it as though it were a blighting curse.<sup>65</sup>

Let any scientist, philosopher, or critic write a book; let that book contradict itself as the Bible does, and on the head of that writer, the world will pour out the full measure of its scorn, while his book will become a monument to the ignorance, folly and presumption of a man who took the human race for fools.

Take another contradiction. Every normal human being is anxious to have a good name. To be favorably known, to be respected, to be

60. Num. 12:3; Num. 31:17 61. Ex. 9:3,6; Ex. 14:9

62. 2 Kings 2:11; John 3:13 63. Deut. 14:26; Prov. 20:1

64. Matt. 6:13; James 1:12 65. Prov. 10:15; Luke 6:24

## ONE HUNDRED CONTRADICTIONS

recognized by all as honest, brave, and loving—what could be more pleasing than this? So far the Bible agrees—“A good name is better than precious ointment.” But according to Luke, a good name is a curse—“Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you.”<sup>66</sup> Happy is the man who bears a good name; but, oh, the terrible calamities that shall befall him! Such is the logic of the Bible. Can it really be that the contempt of mankind is to be courted, rather than the love and approbation of one’s fellows?

Who would exchange the wondrous name of Abraham Lincoln—the calm, logical, upright mind—the tender, loving, generous heart—serene in peace, heroic in war—freedom’s fearless friend—unmoved by the hatred of millions—careless of the world’s applause—worshipping the ideal—anxious above all things to save a nation from disunion, to free a race from slavery’s chains—and at the last, crowning a life of virtue and devotion to the common good with the melancholy laurel of the martyr—who would exchange the name of Lincoln for that of Kaiser Wilhelm II, who plunged humanity into the most frightful of wars, made millions of martyrs and widows and orphans, brought the nations to the very verge of ruin to gratify his vicious lust for empire, and then fled from his tottering throne to save his loathesome life from the hands of an outraged world? Who would make the exchange?

66. Eccl. 7:1; Luke 6:26

## IN THE BIBLE

Lincoln is a wreath of glory on the brow of the race. The Hohenzollern is a poisoned arrow in a broken heart. Upon the one the world bestows its honor. In the presence of the other it stands aghast. In the different regard in which Lincoln and the Kaiser are held, we behold the verdict of mankind that the Bible utters arrant folly when it pronounces woe upon those who deserve a good name.

Let it not be supposed that the contradictions of the Bible are chiefly in the Old Testament. The New has its full and rounded share. According to Matthew, the father of Joseph was called Jacob, according to Luke his name was Heli;<sup>67</sup> Matthew traces the descent of Joseph through Solomon; Luke follows it through Nathan, Solomon's brother;<sup>68</sup> Matthew can count only forty-one generations from Abraham to Jesus; Luke mentions fifty-six;<sup>69</sup> if Matthew is right, the angel announced the miraculous conception to Joseph; if Luke is correct, the annunciation was made to Mary;<sup>70</sup> the first Gospel teaches that Jesus was born when Herod was King of Judea; the third declares he was born when Cyrenius was governor of Syria—ten years after Herod's death;<sup>71</sup> Matthew is sure that the child was hurried away by stealth to Egypt; Luke's Gospel plainly shows that he was taken

67. Matt. 1:16; Luke 3:23 68. Matt. 1:7; Luke 3:31

69. Matt. 1:2-16; Luke 3:23-34

70. Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:30,31 71. Matt. 2:1; Luke 2:2-7

## ONE HUNDRED CONTRADICTIONS

without fear to Jerusalem;<sup>72</sup> Mark assures us that three days after his baptism Jesus was in the wilderness with Satan; John explains that at that time he was attending a marriage feast at Cana,<sup>73</sup> if Matthew was well informed, the centurion came in person to Jesus and begged of him to heal his servant; if Luke was not mistaken, the centurion did not come, but sent the elders of the Jews;<sup>74</sup> the first Gospel has it that Jesus was met by two men coming out of the tombs; the second states that he was met by only one;<sup>75</sup> the first teaches that two blind men cried out to him from the wayside; the third informs us that only one man so addressed him.<sup>76</sup>

Search the New Testament for consistency, and you will search in vain. Everywhere you will find disagreement and denial. Rarely do two writers tell the same story. No man seems to have any real knowledge of his theme. Hear-say, half-remembered rumor, and pure invention make up the Gospel narratives.

The writers not only contradict each other, they contradict themselves. Matthew makes Jesus say: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works." A little later, in the same sermon, he puts into his mouth the very opposite—"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them."<sup>77</sup>

72. Matt. 2:13,14; Luke 2:22,39

73. Mark 1:12,13; John 2:1,2

74. Matt. 8:5,6,7; Luke 7:3 75. Matt. 8:28; Mark 5:2

76. Matt. 20:30; Luke 18:35-38 77. Matt. 5:16; 6:1

## IN THE BIBLE

John avows that Christ said: "I and my Father are one." Afterwards he makes him say: "My Father is greater than I."<sup>78</sup> John also writes that Christ declared himself the judge of all men, and later acknowledged that he judged no man.<sup>79</sup> Again, in John, Christ affirms: "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true," while in the same Gospel he proclaims: "Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true."<sup>80</sup>

Who can understand these contradictions? Who can believe them inspired? In the whole story of Christ, there is nothing certain, clear and definite. He was all-powerful, and he was not.<sup>81</sup> He came to bring peace on earth, and he did not.<sup>82</sup> He favored and condemned the use of the sword.<sup>83</sup> He preached non-resistance, and practiced open attack.<sup>84</sup> He told men to love their enemies, and advised them to hate their friends.<sup>85</sup> In Matthew, Mark and Luke, salvation depends upon good works; in John it is the reward of faith.<sup>86</sup>.

The accounts of the arrest, trial and crucifixion of Christ were written by men who did not know the facts. Matthew's simple story of the arrest contradicts John's statement that the arresting soldiers fell to the ground.<sup>87</sup> Matthew says that in his trial before Pilate, Christ spoke

78. John 10:30; 14:28      79. John 5:22; 8:15

80. John 5:31; 8:14      81. Matt. 28:18; John 5:30

82. Luke 2:14; Matt. 10:34

83. Luke 22:36; Matt. 26:52 84. Matt. 5:39; John 2:15

85. Matt. 5:44; Luke 14:26

86. Matt. 6:14; Luke 6:35-37; John 3:36

## ONE HUNDRED CONTRADICTIONS

only two words—"Thou sayest"—and that Pilate marvelled at his not saying more; according to John, he made a speech to Pilate.<sup>88</sup> He was crucified at the third hour, if Mark was not mistaken; at the sixth hour, if Luke was well informed.<sup>89</sup> Mark declares that he was reviled by the two thieves crucified with him; Luke says that one thief railed on him and was rubuked by the other, who acknowledged Christ's innocence and also his divinity.<sup>90</sup>

Matthew says they gave him to drink "vinegar mingled with gall;" Mark says it was "wine mingled with myrrh."<sup>91</sup> According to John, he was crucified before the Passover; the other Gospels say it was after the Passover.<sup>92</sup> If John is correct, he was embalmed before he was buried; if Luke can be believed, he was not.<sup>93</sup>

How many women came to the sepulcher? John says one; Matthew two; Mark three; and Luke at least five.<sup>94</sup> The first Gospel says that Mary Magdalene met Jesus while on her way to tell the disciples; the fourth declares that she met him at the tomb.<sup>95</sup> According to Matthew, she knew him when she met him; according to

87. Matt. 26:47-57; John 18:3-13

88. Matt. 27:11; John 18:34,36,37

89. Mark 15:25; Luke 23:44

90. Mark 15:32; Luke 23:39-43

91. Matt. 27:34; Mark 15:23

92. John 19:14; Matt. 26:17-29

93. John 19:39,40; Luke 23:52-56

94. John 20:1; Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:10

95. Matt. 28:9; John 20:11-16

96. Matt. 28:9; John 20:15 97. Matt. 28:10; Luke 24:49

## IN THE BIBLE

John, she thought he was the gardener.<sup>96</sup> Matthew says that immediately after the resurrection the disciples were commanded to meet Christ in Galilee; Luke says they were told to tarry in the city of Jerusalem.<sup>97</sup> Therefore according to Matthew, they met him on a mountain in Galilee; while according to Luke, they met him in Jerusalem.<sup>98</sup> The force of this contradiction lies in the fact that Galilee and Jerusalem are about a hundred miles apart!

According to Luke, Christ ascended into heaven with his human body; yet Paul asserts that “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.”<sup>99</sup> Luke makes the ascension occur in the evening of the day of the resurrection; the Book of Acts explains that forty days after this Christ had not yet ascended. And Matthew, who knows nothing of the upward flight, quotes from Christ the following words that deny the ascension altogether: “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”<sup>100</sup>

We have considered one hundred contradictions from the Bible. We have seen that it asserts only to deny, and builds only to destroy. It is a wilderness of conflict, an asylum of confusion, an intellectual pandemonium. It discusses everything and settles nothing. It answers every question with a “yes” and a “no.” How can any man using his common

98. Matt. 28:16,17; Luke 24:33-36

99. Luke 24:39,42,43,50,51; I Cor. 15:50

100. Luke 24:1-53; Acts 1:3; Matt. 28:20

## ONE HUNDRED CONTRADICTIONS

sense believe that such a book is sacred, inspired and true? How can he believe that such a book is the perfect word of an infinitely wise God? It is called a revelation. A revelation indeed! And what does it reveal?

Can it be truly said that the Bible sheds the faintest glint of light on the existence, character and conduct of God? How much have we learned about the God who has been seen by many, but whom no man has seen; the God who dwells in light, but whose home is enveloped in darkness; the God whose presence fills the countless worlds, but who moves about this tiny earth clothed in human form; the God who is all-powerful, but who retreats in defeat before a few charioteers; the God who tires, but who never grows weary; the God who is unchangeable, but who is weary with repenting? Let us be honest!

What particular information about God can be derived from a book in which we are assured that he knows the hearts of men, and that he does not; that he gives his blessings freely, and that he does not; that he is just to all, and that he is not; that he creates evil, and that he does not; that he is kind and loving, while commanding the murder of mothers and babes; and that his anger endures but a moment—a moment that lasts forever? Let us use our reason!

And, surely, a God who tempts, and who does not tempt; who lies and who does not lie; who

## IN THE BIBLE

is peaceful, yet a man of war; who is absurdly fussy about the incense of smoking beasts, and who denounces such incense as an abomination; who sanctions and condemns human sacrifices—surely, such a God is not a real God, but a myth—a creature of the fancy—a child of superstition!

Is it conceivable that a God of infinite wisdom came to earth and left behind him such a mutilated, fragmentary and contradictory record as is contained in the four Gospels? If God spoke to man, he would have to address man's reason. Man has no other faculty with which he could understand the message. And the fact that the Bible and the reason are at war—that reason at every crucial point contradicts the Bible's claims—proves that the Bible is not the perfect word of God, but the fallible utterance of man.

There are thousands of clergymen who are honest in their preaching—honest because they are not informed. Against these men I utter no word of reproach. They must live and learn. But what shall we say of the thousands of educated preachers who are thoroughly familiar with the Bible, who know its glaring contradictions, its absurdities, its cruelties, its crimes, and who, nevertheless, continue to preach as though its every word were holy and divine!

These men have really studied the Bible. Their library shelves are crowded with learned

## ONE HUNDRED CONTRADICTIONS

books that analyze and discuss it. They know, as every scholar knows, that the Bible is a collection of pamphlets and tracts; that these documents represent the guesses and opinions of unknown men; that the volume was compiled by priests; and that the doctrine of inspiration gradually grew as a child of priestly invention to fortify priestly power. And knowing as they do that the Bible is a human book, they spend their lives in expounding insipid nonsense about it that educated intellect has everywhere outgrown. Why? Because they have families to support; because they fear to offend their friends; because, plainly, they are neither honest nor courageous.

To tell the truth about the maze of contradictions in the Bible is to free the clergy, to liberalize their congregations, to destroy bigotry, to augment intellectual freedom, and to make it possible for men and women to be honest by enlarging the horizon of their neighbors' minds. The tyranny of the Bible is due to its supposedly inspired character. A knowledge of its self-destroying contradictions will forever dispel that delusion, will shatter the shackles of the brain, drive out the phantoms of superstition's night and herald the glorious dawn of truth!

# INDEX

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>Adonis, 75; his resurrection, 76</p> <p>Aesculapius, his resurrection, 75</p> <p>Anatomy, and brain function, 149</p> <p>Animals worshipped as gods, 2</p> <p>Astronomy, 18-20</p> <p>Athanasian creed, 15</p> <p>Beethoven, his brain convolutions, 147</p> <p>Bible, the guesses of unknown men, 214; the enemy of mankind, 135</p> <p>Book of Mormon, 177</p> <p>Brahma, 3</p> <p>Brahmans, 157</p> <p>Bramwell, Dr. J. Milne, on Spiritualism, 162</p> <p>Buddha, his resurrection, 74</p> <p>Buddhism, its members, 77</p> <p>Cannibalism, approved by the Bible, 127</p> <p>Cassels, Walter R., on late date of Gospels, 44</p> <p>Catacombs, 55</p> <p>Cells, our bodies composed of, 141</p> <p>Chadwick, Rev. John W., 98</p> <p>Cheating, sanctioned by the Bible, 110</p> <p>Clifford, Prof. W. K., 144</p> <p>Chrishna, his resurrection, 74</p> <p>Christ, time of his birth unknown, 47; life of for thirty years a blank, 50; virgin birth of unknown to Paul, 58; miracles of unknown to Paul, 59; teaching of unknown to Paul, 59.</p> <p>"Christ" a commonly assumed title, 68</p> <p>Clement of Alexandria, 65</p> <p>Crucifixion, improbable, 53</p> <p>Creation, 8, 21, 156</p> <p>Creation stories, contradictions in, 178</p> | <p>Design in nature, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26</p> <p>Devil, the, 27</p> <p>Drews, Prof. Arthur, 57</p> <p>Easter, pagan origin of, 101</p> <p>Episcopalian creed, the, 16</p> <p>Erasmus, 45</p> <p>Eusebius, St., 65</p> <p>Evidence, nature of, 93</p> <p>Evolution, 31, 155, 180</p> <p>Farrar, Dean, 62, 66</p> <p>Flood, the, 9</p> <p>Forged Gospels, 45, 46</p> <p>Fox sisters, 162</p> <p>Giles, Rev. Dr., 46</p> <p>Gladstone, weight of his brain, 145</p> <p>God, idea of, a slow growth, 5</p> <p>Gods, personified forces of nature, 2</p> <p>Gospels, when written, 43</p> <p>Haeckel, Prof. Ernst, 171</p> <p>Haynes, E. S. P. 163</p> <p>Human sacrifices, 134, 194</p> <p>Huxley, Prof. 144, 161</p> <p>Immortality, denied by the Bible, 167, 196</p> <p>Inspiration, doctrine of, an invention, 107, 214</p> <p>Irenaeus, 43</p> <p>Isis, 3</p> <p>James, Prof. William, 150, 151, 163</p> <p>Jean Valgean, 70</p> <p>Jehovah, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13</p> <p>"Jesus" a common Jewish name, 67</p> <p>Josephus, 64, 65, 66</p> <p>Juno, 4</p> <p>Jupiter, 4</p> |
|---|---|

## INDEX

- Kaiser, Wilhelm, II, 131, 206  
Koran, the 177
- Leuba, Prof. James H., 164  
Lodge, Sir Oliver, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161  
Lying, sanctioned by the Bible, 108  
Lupi, Antonmaria, 48
- Manuscripts of New Testament, lost, 45  
Martyr, Justin, 65  
Matter and force, 140  
Maudsley, Dr. Henry, 144  
McCabe, Joseph, 68, 163  
Mill, John Stuart, 165  
Milman, Dean, 46, 61, 66  
Miracles of Christ, unknown to Paul, 59  
Murder, sanctioned by the Bible, 128  
Myers, F. W. H. 161
- Napoleon, 146  
Nature's forces personified, 2
- Origin, 65  
Osiris, 3, 74, 77  
Ostwald, Prof. Wilhelm, 167
- Palladino, Eusapia, 162  
Paul, St., Christ of Gospels unknown to, 57-61  
contradicts Gospels, 97  
Personal God, a contradiction in terms, 18  
Pharaoh, 9, 10  
Philo, 63  
Plagues of Egypt, 9  
Plato, 151  
Pope Hadrian, I, 55
- Religious persecution, upheld by Bible, 120  
Remsburg, John E. 63  
Renan, Ernest, 49  
Renaissance, 71  
Resurrection, the real, 103  
Robertson, John M., 57, 68  
Romanes, Prof. G. J., 144
- Sabbath, 197  
Sacrifices, 192  
Sanhedrin, Jewish, 84  
Schmiedel, Dr. Paul W., 57, 81  
Shakespeare's characters, 70  
Sidgwick, Prof. 163  
Slavery, upheld by the Bible, 116  
Smith, Prof. Robertson, 46  
Spencer, Herbert, 171  
Spiritualism, 160, 161, 162
- Tacitus, "Annals" of, 66, 67  
Telepathy, 159  
Tertullian, St., 65  
Theophilis of Antioch, 43  
Trinity, doctrine of the, 15  
Tyndall, Prof. John, 171  
Tyranny, justified by the Bible, 133
- Vedas, the, 177
- Warburton, Bishop, 66  
Wells, H. G., 30  
Westcott, Bishop, 62  
Whittier, 119  
Witchcraft, 28
- Zeus, 4  
Zend-Avesta, 177  
Zoroaster, 170





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